Hafa Adai!

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

Do you agree with the U.S. Labor report that further increasing the minimum wage will hurt the local economy?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

INSIDE

Home-Bound

Hundreds of thousands of desperate travelers pushed their way onto trains Thursday.

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Stalled Talks

A new impasse could scuttle years of peace talks between the Philippine government and Muslim rebels.

MAHARLIKA...Page 13

Britney Committed

Britney Spears is whisked out of the public spotlight Thursday and committed to a hospital psychiatric ward.

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PSS purchases six new school buses. **PAGE 2**

UMDA to retain Nikko workers as much as possible. **PAGE 3**

Two Fijian midwives return to Saipan

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
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REPORTER

Two Fijian midwives have rejoined the Labor and Delivery team at the Commonwealth Health Center last month.

In an e-mail interview, Public Health Secretary Joseph Kevin Villagomez said he is happy to report the news and

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'Guam to benefit from NMI federalization bill'

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

Guam Rep. Madeleine Z. Bordallo has trumpeted the U.S. territory's benefits from the proposed federal takeover of the Northern Marianas' immigration system.

Bordallo

In an address to the people of Guam Thursday evening, Bordallo touted the CNMI immigration bill as a "legislative achievement" in the U.S. House of Representatives.

"I did not initially support the bill when it was introduced, but after it was modified to meet my

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RELATED NEWS

For the text of Bordallo's speech, go to **Page 6**

Dilapidated structure is an eyesore in Garapan

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
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REPORTER

For more than five years, an abandoned lot across the Fiesta Resort & Spa has been a major eyesore in the island's premier tourist district—a distracting

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JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Broken refrigerators, tables, pieces of cements and wood is seen at a dilapidated building along Coral Street, across the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.

NEW LABOR LAW

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Legal counsel to the administration Deanne Siemer talks to members of the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands, Saipan Chamber of Commerce and other employers during a presentation on the new labor law regulations at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe Friday morning.

New flu vaccine may not need needles

By RANDOLPH E. SCHMID
AP SCIENCE WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—Relief may be on the way for all those youngsters trembling at the thought of another needle jab. One day the flu vaccine may simply be placed under the tongue.

Korean researchers say the new vaccine worked in mice, avoiding not only the painful prick but also the discomfort some people feel from the inhaled vaccine.

The team led by Dr. Mi-Na Kweon of the International Vaccine Institute in Seoul reported their findings in Monday's online edition of Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Better ways of delivering vaccine have long been under study, ranging from orally to inhaled, but all seem to have drawbacks.

Now, Kweon and colleagues say, two doses of influenza vaccine under the tongue of mice primed the animals' immune system to fight off what would otherwise have been a deadly dose of flu.

Next, they are turning their attention to people, to see if the under-the-tongue vaccine also

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ON THE NET

Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences: http://www.pnas.org
International Vaccine Institute: http://www.ivi.int

Local

PSS purchases six new school buses

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Public School System officials led by Education Commissioner David Borja, together with school bus drivers, receive the six units of 66-passenger school buses from CNMI's Triple J Motors at the American Memorial Park.

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
rianne_pangelinan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Public School System has purchased six units of 66-passenger school buses from CNMI's Triple J Motors worth up to $457,000.

According to federal programs advisor Tim Thornburgh, the six new buses are replacements for buses that have been in the fleet for over 10 years.

The new buses were turned over to PSS yesterday morning at the American Memorial Park in the presence of PSS and Board of Education officials led by Education Commissioner David Borja, as well as PSS bus drivers.

PSS has a total school bus fleet of 19 buses with 12 regular buses for Saipan and two small buses or vans with wheelchair access for special education students.

"The buses transport 1,700 students from home to school and back home everyday," Thornburgh said.

The five other buses or vans in the PSS fleet provide transportation services to the students on Tinian and Rota.

"Each of the six new buses has air conditioning," Thornburgh said.

Of the six new buses, "one is for Rota, one is for Tinian and four are for Saipan."

According to Triple J Motors representative Ben Lizama, because of weather conditions, the buses for Tinian and Rota will depart Saipan on Feb. 7.

In 2006, the U.S. Federal Transit Administration awarded PSS funds for the purchase of new 66-passenger buses and nine-seat vans for the special education and early childhood programs.

The federal grant included a $90,000 assistance to the CNMI Developmental Disabilities Council to support its Call-A-Ride Program.

SaipanCell MITA Travel opening draws a crowd

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Cellular phones sold like hotcakes yesterday during the grand opening of SaipanCell Communication's MITA Travel full service outlet along Beach Road in Garapan.

The telecommunication company whetted the appetite of the public by offering great discounts on its products during the ribbon cutting ceremony.

SaipanCell gave away free cell phones, some with built-in cameras, for customers who snapped up its $39.95 starter kits, which included a SIM card and $20 load.

The widely popular Motorola KRZR also retailed at a low $199.99, while customers were also enticed by SaipanCell's promotion of a $50 prepaid wireless card that comes along with a free Kyocera K112.

A spin-a-wheel gimmick also rewarded patrons with a number of the company's giveaways, ranging from clocks, to backpacks, to T-shirts.

To top it off, everyone who bought anything at the grand opening was entitled to a raffle ticket that could potentially win them SaipanCell's latest cell phones—the Motorola RAZR2 and the Nokia N73.

The company's retail operations manager, Paulina A. Johnson, said she is happy with yesterday's turnout, which shows that there is indeed a need to expand what was formerly a SaipanCell retail outlet into a full-service kiosk.

"I'm so happy for all the customers that graced our opening today. I'm grateful for their support. I'd also like to thank Juan-Pan [T. Guerrero] and his staff for allowing us to expand our outlet here in partnership with

MARK RABAGO

SaipanCell Communications retail operations manager Paulina A. Johnson and marketing representative James K. Lee join MITA Travel owner Juan "Pan" T. Guerrero, GuamCell Communications marketing communications manager Maria C. Leon Guerrero, and other staff in the ribbon cutting ceremony opening SaipanCell's full-service outlet at MITA Travel Beach Road in Garapan.

MITA Travel," she said.

For his part, Guerrero said the expansion of SaipanCell into a full-service outlet at MITA Travel will be beneficial for both companies.

The former Saipan Chamber of Commerce president said MITA Travel would potentially gain customers from SaipanCell and vice versa.

He added that with the expansion, MITA Travel will truly become a one-stop shop, do-everything facility for many of the people of Saipan.

Aside from booking flights, MITA Travel also has a Western Union money remittance center, a Federal Express office, and can also accept payments from Federal Express card users.

Aside from the grand opening of the SaipanCell full-service outlet at MITA Travel Garapan, yesterday also marked the formal announcement naming MITA Travel as the exclusive wholesale dealer of all of SaipanCell's pre-paid cards.

Also present during yesterday's ribbon-cutting was GuamCell Communications marketing communications manager Maria C. Leon Guerrero.

UMDA to retain Nikko workers as much as possible

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

United Micronesia Development Association, Inc. promised that it will retain employees of the former Hotel Nikko Saipan as much as possible.

The company's president and chief executive officer Russell K. Snow Jr. assured this during an interview with the *Saipan Tribune* immediately following the closing sale of the rechristened Palms Resort Saipan Thursday at UMDA's corporate headquarters in Puerto Rico.

"All the management group that we can retain, we will be retaining. [However] a couple of the people have already left for Japan, but we will retain as much as the management [team] and employees as we can," he said.

Snow

The UMDA president and CEO also quashed reports that the hotel will close soon after it finished its transaction deal with Hotel Nikko's former owners, Japan Airlines.

"We have committed to tour agents that as long as we possibly can, we will continue to operate the hotel. We may shut down parts of it for renovations, but if it's economically feasible, we will keep the hotel open even while we are doing renovation."

On the question of what international hotelier it will tap to manage Palms Resort, Snow said that UMDA will likely make a decision on that in the next two months.

"We will bring in a new management team and a well-known hotel operator. We haven't made a final decision yet because we're still reviewing the proposals from various organizations," he said. "There are several big names—Hilton, Sheraton, Outrigger, Marriott, among many others. In the next 60 days, we will choose the new operator."

Snow said Palms Resort will cater to both the tourist and local market.

"It will be a first-class facility—there will be a spa, a fitness center, and there'll be a lot of activities. But most importantly we would like to bring in the local community into the hotel operation with local stores representing the local community and make it a place where people of Saipan and the CNMI feel welcome. We will make sure that they will be treated very well as we recognize the importance that they have to the business of the hotel itself," he said.

On Thursday JAL Group transferred 1,920 shares of Hotel Nikko Saipan, Inc. (the owner of the property) to UMDA. Under the agreement, UMDA purchased from JAL Group all of its stocks in Hotel Nikko Saipan, Inc.

The hotel premises include a large water park, a wedding chapel facility, restaurants, banquet rooms, tennis courts, racquetball courts, and a botanical garden. The purchase also included nearby staff residences (PauPau Terrace), dormitories, and interest in Tropical Laundry & Linen Supply, Co., Ltd.

UMDA is a CNMI corporation owned by regional individual and corporate shareholders, including the governments of the CNMI, Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia.

UMDA hosted an opening ceremony last night at the hotel.

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Heinz wants hospital out of DPH

A push to remove the Commonwealth's only hospital from the Department of Public Health is now before the Legislature.

Rep. Heinz Hofschneider has prefiled a bill creating a public corporation to oversee the Commonwealth Health Center.

Under House Bill 16-9, the hospital will be governed by a board of trustees and corporation officer, instead of the governor-appointed health secretary.

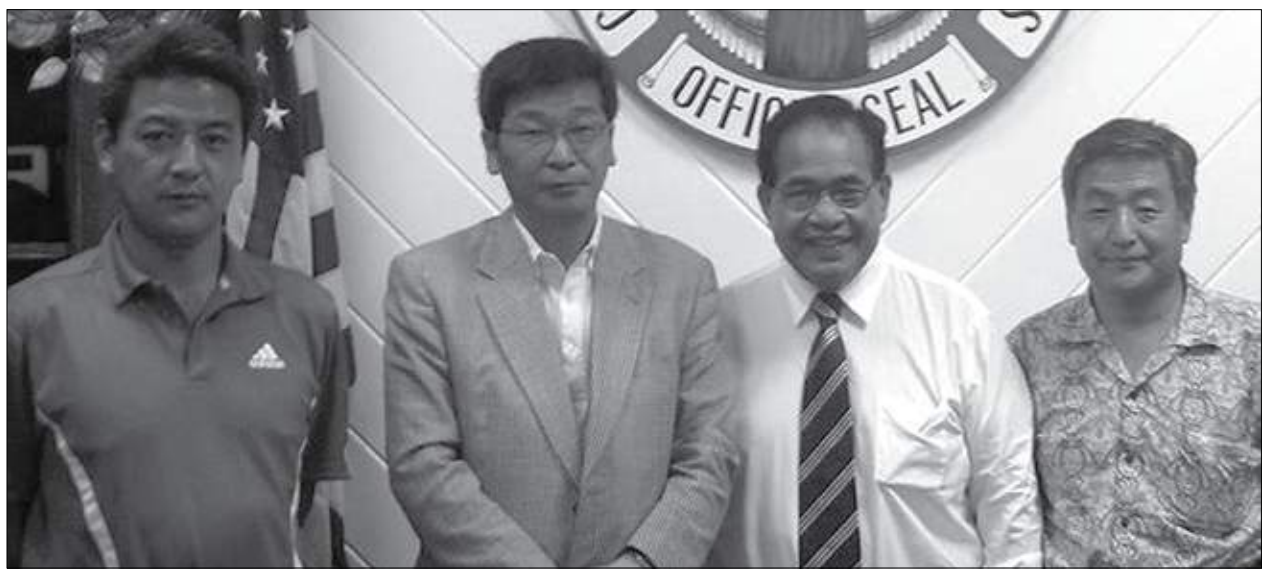
"Hospital service under the Department of Public Health is not operating as efficiently and effectively as demanded by the consumers of health care. Because of the complexity in managing the different health care programs within [DPH], it will be to the benefit of the community to establish a public corporation to independently deal with the acute and long-term care of the Commonwealth," states Hofschneider's bill.

At least one lawmaker has expressed support for the proposed legislation.

"I think it's a great idea," said Rep. Tina Sablan. "It is long overdue. We should not have a political appointee running the hospital. We need an administrator who can work full time on addressing the needs of the hospital." ***(Agnes E. Donato)***

ERRATUM

In the article "Adverse loophole affects teachers' pay," it said that Kenneth O'Harnett holds a bachelor's degree. O'Harnett actually holds a master's degree in Psychology. Our apologies.



KNT VISIT CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial will be off to Japan for a business meeting with KNT (Kinki Nippon Tourist Co., Ltd., Kintetsu International) next week. Fitial will be in Japan from Monday to Wednesday, after accepting an invitation to a business conference meeting by KNT executives who paid him a visit earlier this week. The business conference is set for Tuesday, Feb. 5. Fitial will be accompanied by Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Perry Tenorio. He expects to bring back good news from Japan. Photo shows executives of KNT paying Fitial a visit on Capital Hill. From left, Tashiro Yoshiyuki, Yashiro Makoto, Fitial, and Yoichi Matsumura.

NEW

From Page 1

prompts a strong immune response.

Placing a couple of drops of liquid under the tongue gets the vaccine directly to mucus membranes and prompts a response both in mucus tissues throughout the body as well as in the immune system itself, the researchers said.

"These studies provide a basis for further human testing of this alternative form of needle-free vaccination. Aside from its convenience, sublingual vaccination appears to disseminate immunity to a broader range of organs than the classical routes of injecting or ingesting vaccines," said Dr. Cecil Czerkinsky, deputy director-general for laboratory science at the Institute.

"If these findings are replicated in humans, they could pave the way for the development of a new generation of vaccines that could be used for mass vaccination against respiratory infections, including the pandemic avian-human influenza viruses," he said in a statement.

Several research efforts applying vaccine to mucus membranes have been tried, seeking to avoid both the needle sticks that people dislike and the harsh environment of the digestive system that can damage or destroy a vaccine. Studies of under-the-tongue of other medicines have also been done.

Dr. William Schaffner of Vanderbilt University noted that recent flu studies have involved nasal sprays.

However, he said while he had expected people to be averse to needles, he was surprised to discover that "many people are averse to people messing with their nose ... so there are limitations to nasal spray."

So for researchers looking for another means of doing this, "just a drop under the tongue at least will protect mice ... that's a very exciting and promising line of investigation," said Schaffner, who was not part of the research team.

And, he added, "if we were faced with a pandemic, the easier and more acceptable we can make the distribution of the vaccine the more rapidly we can protect a proportion of population."

HAPPY B-DAY MYK

Birthday greetings go out to Myk Jacob who celebrates his birthday today, Feb. 2. Jacob works at the Susupe branch of Shirley's Coffee Shop.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

TWO

From Page 1

that a third one will be arriving next month.

"We worked with them [the Commonwealth Health Care Professions Licensing Board] on the regulations that will allow us to hire back some of the Fijian midwives that left several months ago," Villagomez said.

Last July 2007, six midwives were forced to go home due to changes in regulations that now require them to pass the nursing licensure exam.

The board said that it is a non-nursing regulator, and does not require the passage of the written NCLEX to support licensure for midwifery.

The board then adopted emergency regulations such as waiving the nursing examination requirement for Fijian midwives, thereby providing for the immediate licensure of midwives who had previously practiced in the CNMI.

The regulations were adopted amid a lack of midwives and support personnel to deliver babies presently expected for delivery.

The board justified its decision by saying that "midwives are key health care professionals who deliver babies in the CNMI, and CHC has had excellent experience for years with its Fijian-trained midwives. Nurses are not necessarily substitutes for midwives because they are not automatically trained, or automatically competent, to deliver babies."

The board added, "There are a very limited number of physicians available to deliver babies in the CNMI, and because they perform many other medical functions, their time is limited for this set of tasks."

With the return of the Fijian midwives, Villagomez said, "This will improve the delivery of services at our Labor & Delivery Department."

DILAPIDATED

From Page 1

sight for tourists, local residents, and businesses in the area.

The lot consists of a dilapidated building, a tree that was cut down and left to rot, broken pieces of the building scattered throughout the area, and a huge pile of dirt in the center of the rundown infrastructure.

Capt. Carl Brachear calls the abandoned property "a major disgrace."

"That huge pile of dirt has been there for at least five years and nobody's ever bothered to clean that mess up," he said.

Brachear said he spoke with the Division of Parks & Recreations three weeks ago regarding the area and what they plan to do about it.

Division of Parks & Recreation director Tony Benavente said, "Captain Carl and I discussed about the area and I do share his concern."

Benavente said his staff "are kind of tied up at the Marpi sites but I have made out a schedule for my supervisor to go over and look at the area."

The rundown building is located outside the Paseo, just across the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.

The owner of a neighboring business said his customers have shared with him that they are turned off with what they are seeing.

"I don't know why these people are not doing anything to clean that mess up. Don't they know that this is the last thing tourists want to see when they visit?" he asked. He declined to be named for this story.

Benavente explained that the area is not the responsibility of his division but that of the Department of Pubic Works.

"Our responsibility is within the Paseo de Marianas," Benavente said. "Right now our budget is really down. We can't even buy so many trash bags or fuel to cut grass."

Despite that, Benavente said he told Brachear that "if we have the time and are done catching up on our sites, maybe I will see what our schedule is like and finally detail some guys to clear that area. It's within the hotel district, and I agree, it needs to be cleaned up."

He added that if heavy equipment is needed, he will then ask for the assistance of Public Works.

"It's an eyesore, so we should all help each other out," Benavente said.

He said that he cannot say for sure that Parks and Recreation can maintain the area continuously "but I can say for sure, at least for the time that it looks bad, that we can help."

Benavente explained that budgetwise, "I don't have so much. And it's not budgeted within my operation. But whenever I get concerns, I think I can spare some guys to help out."

"Right now, we're so tied up with all sorts of details and work schedules, and we're just trying to do our best with the very little that we have," he added.

The abandoned area, according to Brachear, belongs to a Juan B. Camacho. The last person who allegedly occupied a small area in the corner of the dilapidated building was a young Chinese woman who rented the place almost seven years ago for $1,000 a month to house a noodle business. According to Brachear, Camacho had raised her rent to $2,000 a month. She balked and closed down the shop.

"After that, everything just went down," Brachear said.

He added that, "Apparently, there are two attorneys managing Camacho's account. So somebody has access to his money, they just need to part with it. But the money is not the issue, this area just needs to be cleaned up."

He added that he saw construction being started at the building but then it was later abandoned.

"Of course you expect it to deteriorate. I had also seen some guys a few months ago taking things down. I thought they were going to clean up the mess, but they didn't," he said.

Benavente said he will try to send some of his staffers at least by the end of this week to help clean out the area.

"I used to work for a director and every time we had a meeting in regards to what needed to be done, he always said 'no' or 'cannot.' I don't like either of those words. Because I know things can really be done. It's only a matter of finding ways of scheduling operation and helping each other out," Benavente said.

GUAM

From Page 1

concerns, I signed on a cosponsor," she said in her third congressional address to her constituents.

The House-passed bill applying federal policy to CNMI immigration includes a number of provisions important to Guam, Bordallo reported.

One of those provisions extends to Guam the same exemptions from temporary work—or H—visa caps that the CNMI would receive under the bill. She said this "ensures parity for our two jurisdictions."

Bordallo also highlighted the provision creating a regional visa waiver program for Guam and the CNMI. The new visa waiver program would be similar to the existing Guam-only visa waiver program, but would extend from 15 to 45 days the length of stay for visitors.

"This provision has the potential to make our visitor product more competitive," she said.

Guam's public and private sectors both contributed to the drafting of the provision, according to Bordallo.

The CNMI immigration bill now awaits floor consideration by the Senate as part of Senate bill 2483, an omnibus bill made up of some 50 House-approved bills.

Title VII of the omnibus package, S. 2483, contains the exact text of H.R. 3079 as passed by the House on Dec. 12, 2007, and as approved by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on Thursday.

The Senate adopted a unanimous consent agreement governing debate on S. 2483 before it adjourned in December. That agreement limits the number of amendments that may be offered on the Senate floor to S. 2483 to five amendments and those amendments are expected to address aspects apart from the CNMI title.

The Senate majority leader will determine when S. 2483 can be brought to the floor for consideration.

Weight loss challenge at the Aqua Resort

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
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REPORTER

The Aqua Resort Fitness Center has organized a weight loss challenge *a la* the reality show, *The Biggest Loser* for residents who have made it their 2008 New Year's resolution to lose weight.

Fitness trainer Alvin Rebong said that 32 people have signed up for this year's challenge, which started Jan. 1 and will run all the way through March 31.

Rebong said come March 31, the person who has lost the most weight will win a one-night free stay and free breakfast at the Aqua Resort Club. The second placer will get a three-month membership to the Aqua Resort Fitness Center; third prize is a free 16-minute massage provided by the Aqua Resort Club.

The concept came about after brainstorming with different departments of the Achugao resort.

Rebong, who has been a fitness trainer for at least 20 years and had pioneered Aqua Resort's Fitness Center, said that, "The main purpose of all this is to reach out and try to help those who want to be helped as far as wanting to lose weight and live healthier lifestyles."

Participants in the weight loss challenge are required to come in three times a week for an hour each time. Exercises include cardiovascular exercises such as walking and running and lessons on basic diet plans.

"If you really want to lose weight, stock up on your fruits, vegetables, fiber, carbs [carbohydrates] and protein. Exercises regularly and live healthily," Rebong said.

The 32 participants, Rebong said, includes locals and other residents. There are even a few of the island's politicians joining in all the hype.

This session of the Aqua Resort's weight loss challenge is already closed for sign-ups. Another sign-up for the new session will commence on later dates.

Ongoing promotions such as the "Group of Five" promotion is still ongoing, Rebong said.

The "Group of Five" is a group promotion that requires a five friends or family in the group. Members can take advantage of Aqua Resort's swimming facilities, the fitness center, and the steam and sauna.

The promotion costs $1,500 and is good for one year.

"That's a huge saving!" said Rebong.

2 Tinian beaches are red-flagged

The Division of Environmental Quality has red-flagged the Unai Dangkolo and Unai Babaui beaches on Tinian after samples collected showed excessive concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria.

DEQ advises the public not to fish or swim within 300 feet of these beaches for the next 48 hours or until notified.

DEQ said that samples collected from these locations contained concentrations enterococci that exceeded the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards. These bacteria can indicate the presence of human and animal waste in the water.

However, studies have shown that storm water runoff in tropical environments may also contain these bacteria from the natural environment, which may not be directly associated with public health concerns.

DEQ analyzes samples of marine recreational and storm drainage water from 10 locations on Tinian. Contact DEQ at 664-8500 with any questions.

BoG promotes two to VP

HAGATNA, Guam—The board of directors of the Bank of Guam announced yesterday the promotions of David J. Arriola and Bea Pereda to vice president.

Arriola, who is now vice president, Tumon Bay branch manager, started with the Bank of Guam as a part-time employee in 1989 while attending the University of Guam. He continued his fulltime employment after he received his bachelor's degree in Public Administration in 1994, and earned a master's degree in Business Administration in 2000 while working. In 2001, Arriola was selected to attend the Pacific Coast Banking School at the University of Washington in Seattle, from which he graduated in 2003. Arriola is a 1988 alumnus of Fr. Duenas Memorial School, and is an avid golfer.

Arriola

Pereda

Arriola has worked in the branch network, as a management trainee, and in the International Division as a credit officer. He has been the branch manager at the Bank's Tumon Bay Branch since 2000.

Pereda is now vice president/assistant branch & central operations administrator and had been with the Bank of Guam since she graduated from George Washington High School in 1979. She has served in a variety of operations positions, including teller, commercial loan clerk, note clerk, and International Service Division manager. Before she assumed the title of assistant branch & central operations administrator, she was the Saipan operations manager and Rota branch manager. ***(BoG)***

Concepcion completes officer training

Saipan son and native Aldebert Attao Concepcion Jr. graduated from the U.S. Army's Officer Candidate School training at Fort Benning, Georgia on Jan. 10, 2008. Concepcion successfully assumed his new rank as 2nd Lieutenant (O1) and as an Officer in the U.S. Army.

Concepcion is the son of Aldebert Concepcion Sr. and Celina Cabrera Attao-Concepcion of Chalan Piao, Saipan. Concepcion is married to Carmen Quitugua Nekai-Concepcion. They have three sons: Aldebert N. Concepcion III, Joseph L. N. Concepcion and Brian M. N. Concepcion. His siblings are Christopher, Kimberly and Michael.

Concepcion's parents and his brother Christopher attended the OCS graduation ceremony. Also present at the promotion ceremony was Sgt. Anthony Tenorio of Saipan, currently stationed at Fort Stewart, GA who attended at the request of CNMI Resident Representative Pete A. Tenorio.

"I am deeply honored and proud of 2nd Lt. Aldebert Concepcion Jr. in his recent graduation and promotion ceremony assigning him the rank of 2nd Lieutenant and Officer in our nation's army," said Tenorio. "Lieutenant Concepcion joins the ranks of our men and women from the Northern Marianas who have exemplified honor, selfless courage, commitment and service to our nation's ideals and principles."

Concepcion originally joined the U.S. Army in 2001 and was initially stationed at Fort Stewart, Georgia, home of the famed 3rd Infantry Division. He was a member of the Judge Advocate General Corps. In 2003, Concepcion was deployed to the Middle East in the War against Terror and was part of the Allied Forces that initially invaded Iraq. Following his tour of duty in the Middle East, Concepcion returned to the United States. and was then transferred to Camp Zama in Japan where he was eventually selected to attend the Army's Officer Candidate School training.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
2nd Lt. Aldebert Attao Concepcion Jr. is shown here being pinned by parents Aldebert Concepcion Sr. and Celina Attao Concepcion during the recent Officer Candidate School graduation ceremony at Ft. Benning, Georgia, on Jan. 10, 2008.

The mission of the Officer Candidate School is to train, educate and commission officers in order to provide the Army with leaders of character who live by the "Warrior Ethos" and core Army values. OCS Army training provides selected personnel with the fundamentals of leadership and basic military skills, instills professional ethics, evaluates leadership potential and commissions those who qualify as second lieutenants in all 16 basic branches of the Army. ***(PR)***

YOUR WEEKEND IS AT
CLUB
February 1 and 2, 2008 Friday and Saturday
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the return of DJ'S Q AND BERG
AND THE CREW OF WREXXSHOP
With the Hottest,
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ZYNERGY
Win raffle prizes
Comedy Show starts 6pm
Followed by HIP HOP JAM 2 and ZYNERGY
Comedy Tickets available at the gate
HIP HOP JAM 2 and ZYNERGY
Door Opens at 6pm
$5.00 door charge
with 1 complimentary drink
Another exciting offer from the grand!
SGH Saipan Grand Hotel
A TanHoldings Company
CHIVAS REGAL 12
SAIPANCELL COMMUNICATIONS
The Choice is Clear.
stress free
NO I.D. NO ENTRY

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

Primarily positive

The front-loaded schedule of the 2008 presidential primary season was widely expected to be a disaster. We were among those who argued that holding so many contests so early in the year would give well-funded national candidates an edge and reduce the chances of a truly competitive race in which a lesser-known candidate could prevail over time. We're pleased to see that it's not looking so bad after all. Instead of producing an early stampede to the richest and best-known candidates, the primary schedule has mostly done what it was intended to do: allow voters in very different states to have more of a say in deciding the viability of candidates, while still winnowing out the also-rans.

Democrat John Edwards and Republican Rudolph W. Giuliani were sensible to end their campaigns after their poor showings in Florida on Tuesday. Both began with national name recognition, but neither caught fire. Edwards was determined to focus attention on the enduring problem of poverty in America, but his blaming of corporate greed as its primary cause rang false to many voters. Giuliani had the courage to run as a pro-choice, pro-gun-control, tough-on-terrorism Republican, but his temperament was judged unpresidential by many of the moderates he courted.

Their exit has left each party with two supremely well-qualified front-runners. Without the distraction of a huge field, Republican voters going to the polls on Feb. 5 will be able to focus more narrowly on the differences between John McCain and Mitt Romney, while Democrats will be forced to choose between Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama. As luck would have it, "Super-Duper Tuesday" may not determine the nominee, at least in the tight Democratic race. So the states that vote later, including delegate-rich Louisiana on Feb. 9, may yet have their say.

The Democrats will still have to resolve the question of what to do about the delegates from errant Florida, which held its "beauty contest" primary early against party rules. Many predict that the Democratic National Committee will cave and that Florida's delegates will eventually be seated at the nominating convention. But to do so would set a dreadful example to flag-jumpers in 2012. Floridians should be required to sit out this year's convention.

And although the presidential contests are working out well this year, the only long-term solution to the competition among states to hold ever-earlier primaries is a rotating system among regional blocs. We hope we're wrong again in judging that outcome unlikely.

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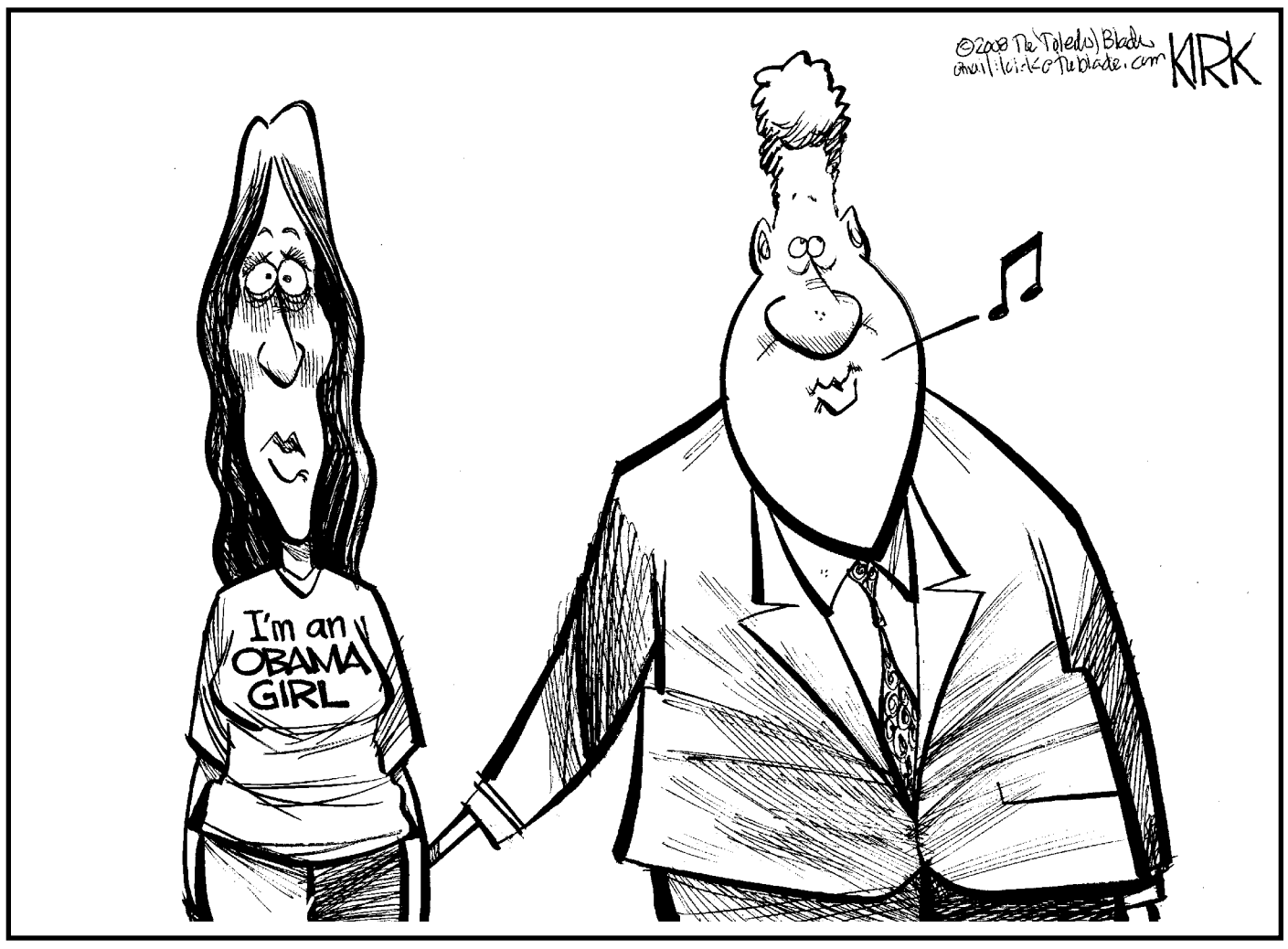

'Building partnerships'

Editor's Note: The following is the official text of the speech that Guam Delegate Madeleine Z. Bordallo delivered during her Congressional Address to the 29th Guam Legislature on Jan. 31, 2008.

First of a two-part series

By MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Madeleine Z. Bordallo is the Guam representative to the 110th U.S. Congress.

Buenas noches todos hamyo.

It is my honor to stand before you this evening to deliver my third Congressional Address. Let me begin by asking you to join me in remembering and honoring the late Senator Tony Unpingco, my dear friend, who leaves us with a legacy of what the essence of public service should be. His life and his work will inspire us for many years to come. Please rise and join me in a moment of silence.

Our thoughts and prayers are also with you Senator Mark Forbes and your family today and we hope you have a full recovery.

It is my practice to deliver my Congressional Address between the first and second sessions of Congress. Today is a significant day for me because it is the anniversary of the passing of my husband, Ricky. I think Ricky is smiling tonight as I give this report to our people—and he would be thrilled that I am serving as your representative in Congress. In fact, I would not be surprised if he had a "thought flash" and is dictating one of his famous memos with his input for this speech.

The 110th Congress began with a historic shift in power as the Democrats took control of both the House and the Senate. One of the most important changes has been the restoration of the Delegate vote on the floor in the Committee of the Whole. This allows us to vote on amendments to a bill, but not final passage. Although the House rules make this a symbolic vote, it is nonetheless a meaningful symbol of participation.

Days after the election in 2006, the transition to our majority status yielded one of the pleasant surprises of the 110th Congress. As the majority party leader, Speaker Pelosi received additional slots in the House page program. I immediately requested an opportunity to nominate a page, and my nominee was accepted into the program. Breanna Lai, "Boo," came to Washington in January 2007 on a cold, wintry day. She spent a semester in the page program living in a dormitory with her fellow pages, going to school in the early morning and then working on the House floor later in the day. She made many friends and made a positive impression for Guam.

In 2005, I was fortunate to be asked to nominate a page for the spring program, the same program Boo participated in. My first page was Jon Junior Calvo, who is now a student at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Jon is home for the semester and I would like Jon and Boo and their proud parents to stand and be recognized.

The city of Washington is one of our nation's greatest classrooms, with its monuments, museums and cultural attractions. That is why I have made an effort to provide internship opportunities for college students in my Washington office. Over the past five years we have had a number of outstanding interns, including Ria Baldevia, Régine Biscoe, Colton Borja, Krystina Borja, Lani Camacho, Adam Carbullido, Christian Eusebio, Moñeka de Oro, Alex Djalali, Jonathan Duenas, Daniel Gatewood, Joy James, Scott Knudson, Jonathan Lotz, Derek Mandell, Jessica Marati, Matthew Mateo, Daniel McDaniel, Jennifer McFerran, Robert Nakamura, Stephan Perez, Paulo Pontemayor, Selina Pothen, Teresa Sablan, Carla Santos, Darin Santos, Phil Torres, Kelly Toves, Katrina Untalan, and Vera Wu. For students and parents watching this broadcast on television or tuning in on the radio, I want you to take note of these opportunities. We have already accepted applicants for this summer, including Samantha Lai, Champ Camacho, Mikáele Cruz and Brices Flores. I know some of the students and parents are here with us tonight and I ask you to please stand and be recognized.

Our future is also represented by our young men and women who have been appointed to our nation's service academies. One of the first bills I introduced in Congress increased the number of service academy nomination slots for Guam. We currently have more cadets and midshipmen at the service academies than at any other time. At the Air Force Academy are Korey Mundell, David Lee Hooper, Joseph Crisostomo, Jae Hyun Kim, Dominic Leon Guerrero, and Suong Hun Lee. At the Naval Academy, we have Chelsea Reidy, Kimberly Lizama, and Raymond Piana. At the Naval Academy Prep School we have Jonathan Tenorio and Jade Prudente. And at the Military Academy at West Point we have Daniel McDaniel and Kathryn Tabunar. These young men and women, upon graduation, will serve our nation as military leaders. Some of their parents are here tonight and I call on them to stand and be recognized.

Many of our young men and women choose to serve our nation on active duty or in the Guard and Reserves and the Coast Guard. I have seen our men and women in the far corners where they serve, from Iraq, to Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, and the Persian Gulf. I know that we are all proud of our men and women who serve and we pray for them every day. I want to recognize our partners in freedom, the commanders of military units on Guam for the outstanding job they do and for the leadership they provide. For the

See BUILDING on next page

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Letters to the Editor

Knowledge is power

I'm sure that I'm not the only one who get anxious every time we hear differing interpretations of HR 3079. Almost everyday, we hear new things and it gets more exciting. These last few days, one group came out very strongly to tell us that HR 3079 is misleading the guest workers because eventually our number will be reduced to zero. On the other hand, another group is telling us that, although that is the intent of this bill, there are ways for guest workers to remain on island if they want to. It's scary.

I've attended forums, presentations and read both PL 15-108 and HR 3079. I listen to people's opinion and concerns and I try to be objective as much as I can. When people pick a side whether pro- or anti-federalization, it's just normal. After all, change is difficult and almost always is not welcome because it requires people to learn and embrace new things. But what is disappointing is when people know in their heart that they do not speak the truth. I'm not writing to condemn, question or ask those people to stop their propaganda. It's their business and I presume that they're acting within the bounds of their conscience.

HR 3079 is, for the most part, about us, the guest workers of this island, whether Filipino, Chinese, Koreans, Japanese, Bangladeshis, etc. They are talking about us! When the pro and the anti are doing what they need to do, we're caught in the middle. I say now is the time for us to stand up and speak for ourselves. We already heard enough of the pro- and enough of the anti-federal takeover. Let's get together, discuss and take a stand and act fast. Only us can help ourselves. The Unity March proved that we can achieve something if we act as one.

In the meantime, here are some things that we can do to empower ourselves:

a) Read, read and read again PL 15 – 108 and H.R. 3079.

b) Attend forums, meetings, presentations, etc. and don't get intimidated. It's always good to ask if you have questions.

c) If you have questions or need an objective interpretation on some provisions, call Mr. Jim Benedetto of the Federal Ombudsman Office at 322 8030 or email him at ombudsman@federal-ombudsman.com.

d) Do what is legal and right.

e) Respect and love other people even if they don't agree with our views and opinions.

HR 3079 has strong and weak points just like any other law. We should examine ourselves so we can decide what is best for us and our children. My hope is for the guest workers to be armed with the facts so we can take a firm stand and not be swayed by lies or confusing stories. Let's be careful in listening. Know the background of the person speaking and know their motives first before we buy what they're selling us.

There are thousand of guest workers on Saipan, Tinian and Rota. While it may appear that at this point both the pro- and anti-federalization camps are concerned about the plight of the guest workers should HR 3079 becomes a law, we should pray that the Holy Spirit will bless us with the wisdom to distinguish who is genuine and who is not. If you are a guest worker who wants to get involved, please email me at irenebdi@yahoo.com. There are so many things to do but so little time left. Let's join hands and be counted as one. Perhaps this time, they'd listen to us.

Irene N. Tantiado
Chinatown, Garapan

PRAXIS scores

My heart goes to those who did not achieve proficiency level in each subject area in the PRAXIS test. Although I agree that PRAXIS is not the only basis in becoming a proficient teacher, I still believe that it is a good start to install highly qualified staff. Teachers play a vital role in molding the future generation. Let's also keep in mind that lawyers, doctors, engineers and the likes are not allowed to practice their profession unless they pass the board exam.

Let's dissect the PRAXIS I tests or PPST (Pre-Professional Skills Tests): Reading, writing, and mathematics tests are usually taken before graduating from the college of education. The reading and writing are very parallel to the SAT exams that are taken by 11th and 12th graders as a form of evaluation to qualify to some colleges or universities. In mathematics, the questions are designed with minimal mechanical math process, but more of mental process; an application of reasonableness in the answer is much more needed.

Let's talk about the passing scores in PRAXIS 1 in CNMI: Reading, 170; Writing, 170; and Math, 170. There are 40 multiple choice questions in Reading and in Math. A test taker needs about 20 correct answers in these tests to score 170. This is only 50 percent of the 40 questions asked. In the tests we give to our students, the passing score is at least 60 percent, which is 10 percent higher than the PPST. In writing, there are about 38 multiple choice questions about grammar, sentence structure, word mechanics and one essay question. The possible essay questions are already published in the ETS website (tests company). A test taker can practice at least five of those questions and be prepared. Out of 38 multiple choice, about 20 correct answers and 50 percent of the five-parts essay standard requirements is a passing score of 170. In comparison, all other states have higher PPST passing scores than in CNMI.

Therefore, I believe that teachers can pass the PPST. Let's prove that teachers have the knowledge and power! Let's prepare with a positive attitude and practice more to become proficient.

Alma Gumbosky
Pittsburgh. PA

BUILDING

From Page 6

sacrifices our servicemen and women throughout the world make every day for our freedom, we extend our deepest gratitude. Those who serve in our military and are with us tonight please stand and be recognized.

The men and women who serve our nation today are equal in courage and spirit to the men and woman who served during World War II and who liberated our island from occupation. Today, our work in Washington continues in the effort to bring recognition for those who endured the occupation. The House of Representatives passed H.R. 1595, the Guam World War II Loyalty Recognition Act, during the first session by a recorded vote of 288 to 133. I want to recognize the role of former Congressman Ben Blaz, who joined me on the House floor for the debate on H.R. 1595. Congressman Blaz, in partnership with Governor Camacho and Senator Unpingco, helped secure Republican support. The Guam Legislature passed a resolution supporting H.R. 1595, and I thank all of you as well. This is the furthest that any war claims bill has advanced, but it is not the end of the journey. The bill is now before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

I continue to work on moving H.R. 1595 through the Senate and ultimately to the President's desk. I have recently had discussions with key Senate leaders including Senators Daniel Inouye, Daniel Akaka, James Webb and Hillary Clinton to seek their assistance in helping to shepherd H.R. 1595 through the Senate. I recognize our progress was made possible by the foundation laid by former Congressmen Tony Won Pat, Ben Blaz and Robert Underwood, as well as the work of the Guam War Claims Review Commission, which included Senator Tony Unpingco and Senator B.J. Cruz. This is one area where all of us must remain united in purpose and determined in our resolve, and in partnership with the Governor, the Legislature, and all of our people, we will continue to do everything we possibly can to enact H.R. 1595 into law. This is only possible with both Democratic and Republican support in Washington and I look forward to bipartisan cooperation to make it happen.

We had another legislative achievement in the House that will lead to a new partnership with our friends in the Northern Marianas for our visitor industry. H.R. 3079, the Northern Marianas Immigration, Security and Labor Act, includes a number of provisions important to Guam. The bill passed the House in September with bipartisan support. I did not initially support the bill when it was introduced, but after it was modified to meet my concerns, I signed on as a cosponsor.

The Legislature, led by Sen. Judi Guthertz, expressed concerns about the bill. I thank you for your input and I worked with Chairwoman Donna Christensen to address these concerns. We also extended to Guam the same exemptions from the H-1 and H-2 visa caps that the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands would receive under the bill—this ensures parity for our two jurisdictions.

Most importantly, for the first time, Guam and the CNMI would have a regional visa waiver program based on the Guam-only visa waiver program and extending from 15 to 45 days the length of stay for visitors. This provision has the potential to make our visitor product more competitive.

In working on H.R. 3079, we partnered with the Governor, the Legislature, the Guam Visitors Bureau, the Guam International Airport Authority, the Guam Hotel and Restaurant Association, and the Guam Chamber of Commerce. Our partnership resulted in an improvement of the visa waiver program. Just this morning the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee approved the bill and it is now ready for floor consideration.

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Another change in the 110th Congress is that I have been appointed as the Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans in the Committee on Natural Resources. This is the International Year of the Reef and we are working in partnership with the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force to conserve our coral reef resources. My subcommittee has oversight of the National Wildlife Refuge System, the programs of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and international fisheries and species conservation. We are making progress on many fronts and I am seeking to increase federal support for our conservation programs, the Micronesia Challenge, and our fishermen. My subcommittee also has responsibility for compliance by federal agencies with key environmental laws and we are working to make partnerships between the federal government and local communities more effective.

Undoubtedly our biggest challenge as a community will be the military build-up and the relocation of 8,000 Marines and their family members from Okinawa. As leaders we are tasked to meet this challenge in a way that benefits our island. When I first addressed this body in February 2004, I spoke of the "Challenges Ahead," and in particular, I called for action to prepare for the Base Closure and Realignment round of 2005 (BRAC). Together, in partnership, we made a strong case for protecting our bases and, in fact, highlighted our island's strategic location and unused capacity.

Our message resonated. In addition to BRAC 2005, the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), the Integrated Global Presence and Basing Strategy (IGPBS) and the Overseas Basing Commission contributed to the realignment of military forces in Asia. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld came to Guam with me in November 2003 to finalize his decisions and he traveled to Japan and Korea to consult with our allies on our force posture. These force realignments will strengthen our partnership with our allies and provide for mutual security into the next decade and beyond.

The relocation of Marines comes at a time when Andersen Air Force Base and Naval Base Guam are also undertaking expanded missions. The new missions and the build-up represent a renewed focus on the strategic importance of our island. A $14 billion investment is planned for Guam. The Government of Japan has authorized $6 billion (US) to support the realignment and the United States has pledged $4 billion. In addition, another $4 billion is programmed in future budgets for infrastructure at Naval Base Guam and Andersen Air Force Base.

It is vital for Guam and the federal government to continue their hard work in planning for this proposed build-up of military forces. As the Patriots and Giants can attest as they prepare for Super Bowl XLII, preparation and execution are critical to the success of any team. Team Guam must continue to prepare and be ready to execute difficult tasks in the coming years and I am confident that we will succeed. Team Guam cannot afford mistakes. We should develop a good game plan and execute it. So Governor, as you watch the Super Bowl on Monday, remember, it is all about preparation and execution.

Sattelite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲84° ▼75°	▲85° ▼75°	▲85° ▼75°	▲84° ▼76°	▲83° ▼76°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Sunny	▲87	▼77
Palau	Partly Sunny	▲88	▼77
Yap	Partly Sunny	▲88	▼77
Chuuk	Partly Sunny	▲90	▼79
Pohnpei	Cloudy	▲86	▼76
Kosrae	Mostly Sunny	▲90	▼78
Majuro	Partly Sunny	▲85	▼76

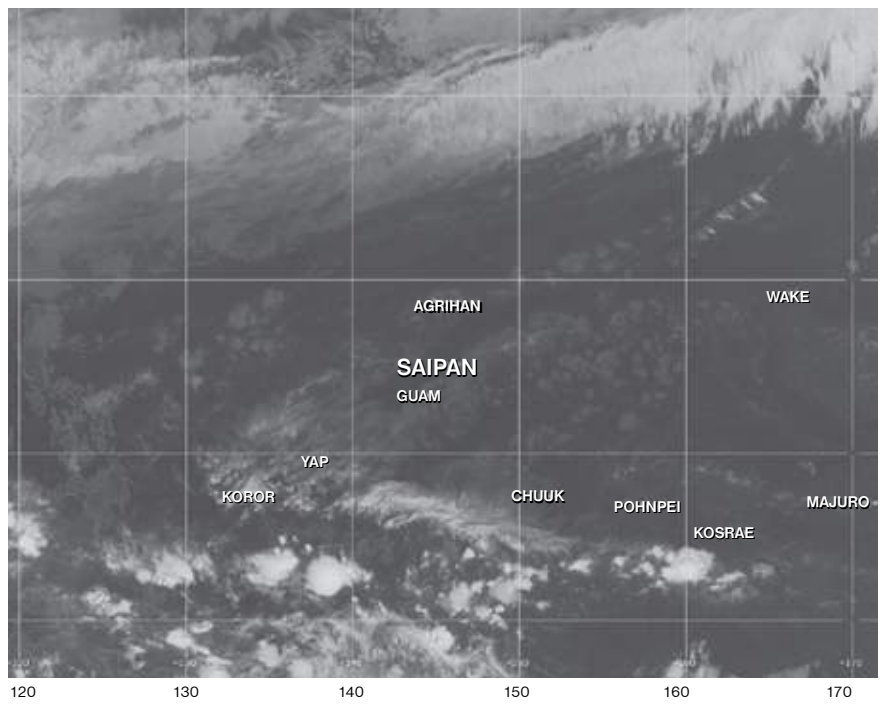
Around The Globe

Auckland	Partly Sunny	▲75	▼64
Beijing	Sunny	▲36	▼17
Hong Kong	Rain	▲56	▼52
Honolulu	Cloudy	▲79	▼70
London	Cloudy	▲37	▼34
Los Angeles	Partly Sunny	▲60	▼48
Manila	Cloudy	▲89	▼75
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	▲85	▼59
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲80	▼69
New York	Partly Sunny	▲48	▼35
Osaka	Rain	▲40	▼38
Paris	Partly Sunny	▲38	▼29
Pusan	Cloudy	▲46	▼28
Rome	Showers	▲54	▼46
Salem	Showers	▲41	▼37
San Francisco	Showers	▲54	▼44
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲38	▼19
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	▲44	▼37
Washington, DC	Partly Sunny	▲53	▼34

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
6:13AM Today	High Tide:	1.5 Feet
10:04AM Today	Low Tide:	1.4 Feet
2:53PM Today	High Tide:	1.7 Feet
11:05PM Today	Low Tide:	0.1 Feet

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, FRIDAY, FEB. 1, 2008
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Trade-wind convergence is generating scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms from south of Palau to south of Chuuk, between the equator and a line from 7N130E to 7N132E to 6N137E to the equator at 155E. A series of weak trade-wind disturbances is producing scattered light showers between 10N and 18N from 130E to 160E, including the Mariana Islands. A shear line extends from 25N145E to 22N130E. Cloudiness and scattered light showers are found along and north of this boundary to beyond 25N.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:46AM	6:15PM
Sunday	6:46AM	6:16PM
Monday	6:46AM	6:16PM
Tuesday	6:45AM	6:17PM
Wednesday	6:45AM	6:17PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	2:30AM	1:48PM
Sunday	3:24AM	2:40PM
Monday	4:16AM	3:35PM
Tuesday	5:07AM	4:32PM
Wednesday	5:55AM	5:28PM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 2, 2008

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO 9313	8:30am	9:05am	3,4,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9597	8:30am	9:20am	1,2,5,6
CO9313	8:30am	10:00am	3,4,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 078	8:25am	1:30pm	Daily via Nagoya
NW 075	4:50pm	7:30pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
NW 083	4:30pm	7:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:25am	11:05am	Daily
Saipan-Manila			
CO 895	4:45pm	6:35pm	6
CO 895	6:45pm	8:35pm	3
Saipan-Seoul			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm	2,4,6,7
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	4:00am	7:35am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Guanzhou			
CZ 3008	5:00am	8:00am	2,6
Saipan-Shanghai			
MU 590	4:20am	7:00am	2,6
Saipan-Beijing			
CA 988	3:15am	7:00am	1,5
Guam-Manila			
CO 891	6:00am	10:30am	3 via Yap and Koror
CO 893	6:30am	8:05am	6
CO 893	8:25am	10:00am	2,7
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am	1,2,4,6,7
Guam-Hongkong			
CO 909	7:45pm	10:40pm	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	10:15am	10:45am	1,2,6

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	11:10am	11:45am	1,2,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	Daily
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9598	10:15am	11:45am	1,2,6 via Rota
CO9600	10:45am	11:35am	3,4,5,7
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:35am	3:05pm	Daily
NW 077	6:15pm	1:10am+1	Daily via Nagoya
Osaka-Saipan			
NW 084	10:40am	3:10pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Manila-Saipan			
CO 890	9:15am	2:55pm	6
CO 890	11:45am	5:35pm	3
Seoul-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:30pm	2,4,6,7
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:30pm	2:50am+1	3,4,6,7
Guanzhou-Saipan			
CZ 3007	8:00pm	4:00am+1	1,5
Shanghai-Saipan			
MU 589	8:05pm	3:00am+1	1,5
Beijing-Saipan			
CA 987	6:05pm	1:55am+1	4,7
Manila-Guam			
CO 894	11:20am	4:55pm	2,7
CO 894	7:45pm	1:20am+1	6
CO 892	9:45pm	5:25am+1	3 via Koror
CO 892	9:45pm	6:30am+1	3 via Koror and Yap
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Hongkong-Guam			
CO 910	11:40pm	6:20am+1	1,5
Rota-Guam			
CO 9313	9:30am	10:00am	3,4,7

(Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana. ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contribution are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

Schedule of Religious Services

CATHOLIC

Mt. Carmel Cathedral
Sunday Mass: 6am, 9am, 11am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm

Korean Center
Sunday: 10:30am
Wednesday: 10am
Thursday-Friday: 8pm
Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm

Kristo Rai Parish
Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am
Monday- Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm
Saturday: 6am and 6pm

Nuestra Senora De Soledad Parish
Wednesday Mass: 6pm
First Friday Healing Mass: 6pm
Saturday Mass: 6pm
Sunday Masses: 7:30am & 9am

Saint Jude Parish
Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am
Wednesday and Thursday: 6pm

San Antonio Parish
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Tuesday and Friday: 6pm

San Francisco de Borja-Rota
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6pm

San Isidro-Rota
Sunday: 5am and 10am
Monday-Wednesday: 7pm
Thursday-Saturday: 5am and 7pm

San Jose (Oleai) Parish
Sunday: 6am and 7:30am
Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday: 6pm

San Roque Parish
Sunday: 9am
Wednesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10:30am

San Vicente Parish
Sunday: 6am, 9am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6pm

Santa Remedios
Sunday: 7:30am
Tuesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10am-Baptism

Santa Soledad
Sunday: 7:30am

PROTESTANT

Born Again Christian (Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan
Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8-10:30pm
Saturday Tagalog Service: 8-10:30pm
Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am
Sunday School for Children: 10-11am
Sunday Filipino Service: 7-9pm

Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 9am
Sunday Morning Worship: 10am
Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm
Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm

Chinese Christian Church of Saipan
Worship Services: Sunday, 10am and 7:30pm
Bible Study: Tuesday-Friday, 9:25pm

Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan
Worship/Study Opportunities
Adult Sunday School: 9am
Youth Sunday School: 9am
English Worship Service Sunday: 10am
Sunday Service: 5:30pm
Worship/Fellowship Sunday: 9:30pm
Evangelism/Follow-up: Sunday/Monday: 1:30/7:30pm
Worship Team: Monday/Saturday-9pm;
Cell Groups Tuesday: 7:30pm
Mid-week Service: 7:30pm
Prayer Meeting Wednesday: 7:30pm
Leader's Bible Study Friday: 7:30 pm
Cornerstone School of Ministry Saturday: 7:30pm

Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 9:00am
Place: Vicarage, Chalan Laulau,
Call 235-0545 for directions

Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan
Worship Service: 9am
GBI Classes: 4-6pm
Prayer Meeting: Monday-Saturday: 6am
Sunday: 7am
Home Cell Bible Study: Wednesday-Friday: 7pm
Youth Service: Friday: 5:30pm

Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan
Thursday: 5:30am (Tagalog); 7:45 pm (English)
Saturday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Sunday: 6:45am (English)
Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)

Immanuel United Methodist Church Koblerville
Sunday Services
8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal
9:00 AM Family Worship
3:00 PM Choir Rehearsal
Wednesdays at Parsonage
7:00 PM Prayer, Share and Care

Immanuel Methodist Church (Filipino Congregation)
Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal
8:00am-Church Service (Tagalog)
9:15am-Sunday School
Wednesday: 8:00pm-Prayer Meeting
Thursday: 7:30pm-Choir Practice (Church)
Saturday: 8:00pm-Choir Practice (Parsonage)

Jesus is Lord Church, Saipan
English Service: 9-11am, Sunday
Tagalog Service: 6-8pm, Sunday

Korean Presbyterian Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 8:20am
Sunday Adult: 10am
Sunday Adult: 11:30am
Sunday Evening: 7:30pm
Wednesday: 8pm

Life in the Son Christian Fellowship, Saipan
Sunday Worship Service: 10am–12noon
Tuesday: Leadership Institute 7pm-10pm
Wednesday: Corporate prayer 7pm-8pm
Last Friday of the month-prayer: 7pm-11pm
Friday: Youth on Fire: 7pm-9pm
Tel. No. 235-LIFE (5433)

Marianas Baptist Church, Saipan
English Worship Service: 9-10:30am
Evening Worship Service: 6-7pm
Children Sunday School: 9-10:30am
Tagalog Sunday School: 11am-12pm
English Sunday School: 11am-12pm
Korean Worship Service: 11am-12pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting:
English, 7pm-8pm
Korean: 8:30pm-9:30pm

Missions Connection Ministry
Every Sunday Celebrations:
10am (English), 6pm (Tagalog)
Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm
Youth Impact Friday: 7pm
Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm

Northern Marianas Christian Church
Sunday Worship Service 10am Fina Sisu
Housing FS#1 (Child care will be provided)
Friday Services @ 7pm Fina Sisu FS#1 for more info pls. contact Ryan 484-2620

Saipan Bible Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30-10am
Divine Worship: 10am-11:30am
Evening Service: 7pm-8:30pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8pm-9pm

Saipan Christian Church
Sunday: 7:30am-10am
Sunday: 6:30 pm -9pm
Monday: 8 pm -10pm (Prayer Meeting)
Thursday: 8pm-10pm (Cell Groups)

Saipan Church of Christ
Sunday Bible Class: 9am
Sunday Worship: 10am
Sunday Worship English: 6pm
Sunday Worship Tagalog: 7pm
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30pm

Saipan Community Church
(Sunday Services)
Palau Service: 7:30am-9am
English Service: 10am-11:30am
Chuukese Service: 1pm-2:30pm
Filipino Service: 5:00pm-7:00pm

Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Saipan
(Saturday Church Services)
Sabbath School Program: 9-10am
Lesson Study: 10-10:40am
Divine Service: 11-12pm
Visitation: 3-4pm
Adventist Youth Program: 4:30-5:30pm
Sundown Worship: 6-7pm

First Baptist Church (Formerly Saipan Baptist Church)
Afetna St., San Antonio
Sunday
9am Sunday school
10am Regular worship
6pm worship
Wednesday
7pm worship
Everyone is warmly welcome to attend our worship services. Transportation is readily available to anyone who needs a ride to our church. For further information, please call Pastor David M. Mclure at 234-1939/235-7779.

Thy Word Ministries Saipan Faith Center
Phone 234-0209
New Christian Charismatic Church Service located in Chalan Paio, Beach Road in the Sablan building on the 2nd floor above Subway Sandwiches.
Senior Pastors: George & Gail Kamakahi
Asst. Pastors: Eric & Penny Sakaguchi
Service Times
Sunday 10:00am Worship Service
Sunday 7pm Discipleship Classes
Tuesday 10:00am Bible Studies
Tuesday 6:00pm Intercessory Prayer
Tuesday 7:00pm Music Practice
Wednesday 7:00pm Mid-Week Service
Saturday 10:00am Evangelism

Upper Room International Ministries
Sunday 5:30am-6:30am
Morning prayer
7am-9am English service
7am-9am Sunday school
10am-12noon
English service, Koblerville
Wednesday 7pm-9pm Prayer meeting
Saturday 7pm-9pm Tagalog service
Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church
Gualo Rai, Saipan

Victory Chapel Christian Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30am
Sunday AM Worship:10:30am
Sunday PM Worship:7:00am
Wed Worship: 7:30pm
Prayer 45 min. Prior to Service Times
Morning Prayer: 6-8am M-S

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

February 02, 2001

Fitial joins gubernatorial race
Armed with a strong campaign platform that lays down concrete plans on making education accessible to all and the determination to alleviate CNMI's economic woes, House Speaker Benigno R. Fitial announced he is running for governor in the November polls. He joins three other prominent personalities who have officially announced plans to run for the hotly-contested seat in Capitol Hill come general elections in a little over eight months.

Disconnection notices alarm Teno
Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio will convene his finance managers to explore solutions to the growing concerns on the government's overdue utility bills that necessitated the release of disconnection notices to 40 agencies and offices. Mr. Tenorio will meet with officials from the Department of Finance, headed by Secretary Lucy Dlg. Nielsen to ensure the continued supply of power in all government offices amid disconnection notices from the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation.

...As CUC cries 'Enough is enough'
Government offices that have not made full utility payments despite notices and request made by the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation will be disconnected by Feb. 20. CUC Board Chair Jesus T. Guerrero said yesterday that delinquent bills particularly those accumulated by the CNMI government have strained their operations which is now on the verge of collapse.

February 02, 2003

Sufficient water in schools urged
Board of Education Chairman Herman Guerrero has asked the Public School System to ensure that all schools have sufficient drinking water. "Make sure that you attend to this because some think that we're not providing drinking water to students, which is not true. I don't want to hear any more complaints," Guerrero told PSS officials during a special board meeting Wednesday.

'For drinkers desperate for a fix, there's always a way'
The government hiked sin taxes partly to alter public behavior in the consumption of alcohol and tobacco products. But, as it turns out, some alcohol drinkers have reportedly found a way around paying the additional burden imposed on alcoholic beverages. House Speaker Heinz S. Hofschneider said he recently learned that some consumers end up getting access to alcoholic beverages that were bought from the Army and Air Force Exchange Service-an exclusive supermarket for military personnel and their families.

MPLA board renews clamor against abolition proposals
Marianas Public Lands Authority board vice chairman Manuel Villagomez is supporting Rep. Arnold Palacios' recent opinion that the proposed transfer or abolition of the agency could be disadvantageous. "It's consistent with our position that the MPLA is better off as an independent agency. I support and agree with Rep. Palacios," Villagomez said. Palacios, who chairs the House Committee on Natural Resources, has emphasized that getting rid of the MPLA board may not be beneficial.

February 02, 2004

CDA, MPLA to release initial money to landowners
Some landowners will finally get their much-awaited compensation this week, possibly beginning today and tomorrow. CDA board chairman Sixto Igisomar said that he and CDA executive director Mary Lou Ada had signed the request for the first drawdown of the bond money at Bank of Guam last Thursday.

Most ex-SU students are now factory workers
Former Saipan University students ended up as contract workers, working mostly now in garment factories after the government' issued them temporary work authorizations or TWAs. Left to themselves, the former students are barely making both ends meet after they were asked to vacate an SU-assigned housing late last month.

Business

Financial turmoil likely to continue

NEW YORK (AP)—As bad news about the financial system piles up, trust—the pillar of investing—is being buried.

The most recent fears are tied to the potential failure of bond insurers, the companies that back the funding for hospitals, schools and other public works. A meltdown there could deliver another devastating blow to battered banks and force higher taxes on homeowners.

That has made it difficult for the Federal Reserve—even with its aggressive rate cuts recently—to restore confidence and quash the volatility and uncertainty.

"The biggest issue is people just don't really know how big this is," Davin Gibbins, chief investment officer at Aris Corp., said of the losses banks could face. "People don't know the size of the problem, and markets hate uncertainty."

"People are afraid to make business decisions," said Donald Light, a senior analyst at Celent.

The risk that bond insurers could lose their top-notch credit ratings comes after world stock and credit markets have already been shaken by billions of dollars in losses tied to subprime mortgages, or loans given to customers with poor credit history.

Economy nearly stalled in Q4

WASHINGTON (AP)—The economy nearly stalled in the fourth quarter with a growth rate of just 0.6 percent, capping its worst year since 2002.

Wednesday's Commerce Department report showed that the economy deteriorated considerably during the October-to-December quarter as worsening problems in the housing market and harder-to-get credit made individuals and businesses more cautious in their spending. Fears of a recession have grown, even as inflation remained elevated.

For all of 2007, the economy grew by just 2.2 percent, the weakest performance in five years, when the country was struggling to recover from the 2001 recession. The housing collapse was the biggest culprit; builders slashed spending on housing projects by 16.9 percent on an annualized basis, the most in 25 years.

The gross domestic product report for the last quarter of 2007 came as the Democratic-run Congress and the Bush administration continued to work on a program of tax rebates and business incentives.

Bush's '09 budget to be tight

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Bush's 2009 budget will virtually freeze most domestic programs and seek nearly $200 billion in savings from federal health care programs, a senior administration official said Thursday.

Overall, the Bush budget will exceed $3 trillion, this official said. The deficit is expected to reach about $400 billion for this year and next.

Bush on Monday will present his proposed budget for the new fiscal year to Congress, where it's unlikely to gain much traction in the midst of a presidential campaign. The president has promised a plan that would erase the budget deficit by 2012 if his policies are followed.

To that end, Bush will propose nearly $178 billion in savings from Medicare over five years- nearly triple what he proposed last year. Much of the savings would come from freezing reimbursement rates for most health care providers for three years. An additional $17 billion would come from the Medicaid program, the state-federal partnership that provides health coverage to the poor.

Wall Street bounces higher

NEW YORK (AP)—Wall Street ended a frenetic January with a huge advance Thursday after investors set aside worries about bond insurers and grew more optimistic that the Federal Reserve's interest rate cuts will indeed help lift the economy. The Dow Jones industrials rose more than 200 points but suffered its worst January in eight years.

The Dow rose 207.53, or 1.67 percent, to 12,650.36. For the month, the Dow lost 4.63 percent—its worst January since losing 4.84 percent at the start of 2000. January's pullback was the steepest seen in any month since December 2002.

Broader stock indicators also jumped Thursday. The Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 22.74, or 1.68 percent, to 1,378.55, and the Nasdaq composite index rose 40.86, or 1.74 percent, to 2,389.86.

The Russell 2000 index of smaller companies rose 17.81, or 2.56 percent, to 713.30.

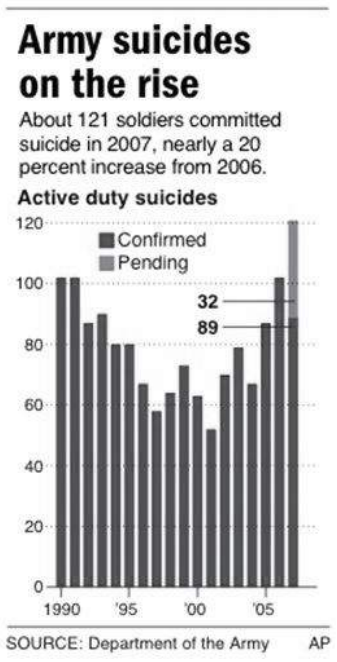
Nation

Army suicides, attempts rise again

WASHINGTON (AP)—Multiple new efforts aimed at stemming suicides in the Army are falling short of their goal: The service anticipates another jump in the annual number of soldiers who killed themselves or tried to, including in the Iraq and Afghanistan war zones.

As many as 121 soldiers committed suicide in 2007, an increase of some 20 percent over 2006, according to preliminary figures released Thursday.

The number who tried to commit suicide or injured themselves for some other reason jumped six-fold in the last several years—from 350 in 2002 to about 2,100 incidents last year. Officials said an unknown portion of that increase was likely due to use of a new electronic tracking system that is more thorough in capturing health data than the previous system.



The increases come despite a host of efforts to improve the mental health of a force that has been stressed by lengthy and repeated deployments to the longer-than-expected war in Iraq, and the most deadly year yet in the now six-year-old conflict in Afghanistan.

"We have been perturbed by the rise despite all of our efforts," said Col. Elspeth Ritchie, psychiatry consultant to the Army surgeon general.

Those efforts include more training and education programs, the hiring of more mental health professionals and the addition of screening programs launched after a succession of studies found the military's peacetime health care system overwhelmed by troops coming home from the two foreign wars.

"We know we've been doing a lot of training and education," Ritchie told a Pentagon press conference. "Clearly we need to be doing more."

Bush wary of jeopardizing Iraq gains

LAS VEGAS (AP)—President Bush said Thursday he will not jeopardize security gains in Iraq by withdrawing U.S. forces too fast, another signal that troop reductions could slow or stop altogether this summer.

The president said he would resist any temptation to bring troops home to score political points with a war-weary public or compromise with Democrats in Congress seeking to wind down the war.

The U.S. troop commitment is expected to be down to roughly 130,000 to 135,000 by July, the same number as before Bush sent in reinforcements a year ago.

"You know, a lot of folks say, 'What's next, Mr. President?'" Bush said. "And my answer is, we have come too far in this important theater in this war on terror not to make sure that we succeed. And therefore, any further troops reductions will be based on commanders and conditions.

ACROSS THE NATION

Police say Ohio nurse abused 14 patients

SANDUSKY, Ohio (AP)—Investigators have verified 14 cases of abuse by a nightshift nurse who told police he abused nearly 100 patients at health care centers since the 1980s, authorities said Thursday. John Riems, 49, was arrested last week and has been charged with raping a partially paralyzed nursing home patient. That case sparked the investigation and emerged when a relative of the patient became suspicious and called police. Some of the 14 victims were physically or mentally unable to tell others what had happened, said Perkins Township Police Chief Tim McClung. He said that the victims included men and women, mostly older, and that two have died. Riems has worked at 12 nursing homes and hospitals in northern Ohio and one care center in New York.

New trial ordered in shaken baby case

MADISON, Wis. (AP)—An appeals court overturned the conviction of a baby sitter on Thursday and ordered a new trial, saying the latest research into shaken baby syndrome might prove she didn't kill a baby in her care. The woman, Audrey Edmunds, was convicted in 1996 of reckless homicide in the death of 7-month-old Natalie Beard. Edmunds, who had been baby-sitting the girl, was sentenced to 18 years in prison. In her appeal, Edmunds, 46, argued that recent developments in medical research into shaken baby syndrome cast doubt on her conviction. The District 4 Court of Appeals agreed Edmunds has presented enough new evidence to win a new trial.

Public viewing begins for Mormon leader

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—A few hundred people waited in freezing temperatures Thursday to view the body of Gordon B. Hinckley as the Mormon church began three days of public mourning for its president. Joined by two friends, Michelle McAllister got up at 4 a.m. and skipped classes at Weber State University to be first in line at the conference center of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. "We wanted to have this experience. He's been my prophet," said McAllister, 21, who was a child when Hinckley became head of the church in 1995. Hinckley was the oldest president of the 13 million member church when he died Sunday at age 97.

Ala. inmate wins stay of execution

ATMORE, Ala. (AP)—A murderer who would have become the nation's first executed inmate in months won a reprieve Thursday from the U.S. Supreme Court a little more than an hour before he was scheduled to die by lethal injection. James Harvey Callahan, set to die at 6 p.m. CST, was granted a stay, Holman prison warden Grantt Culliver told officers on death row. The Supreme Court's brief order did not detail why it granted the stay. It would have been the nation's first execution since September, when the high court agreed to consider whether lethal injection is cruel and unusual punishment. The inmate's attorney had asked the high court to halt the execution after a federal appeals court lifted a stay granted by a Montgomery judge.

Witness: Mom copped to microwaving baby

DAYTON, Ohio (AP)—A former cellmate of a woman accused of killing her month-old baby by burning the girl in a microwave testified Thursday that the woman confessed to the crime, saying the baby "fit right in" the oven. Linda Williams testified that she developed a sexual relationship with defendant China Arnold when the two were cellmates in the Montgomery County jail in March and that Arnold confided in her about what happened to her baby. She said Arnold feared that her boyfriend believed he wasn't the child's father and that he was going to leave her. "She said she put the baby into the microwave and started it and left the house," Williams said. Williams said she asked Arnold how she got the child into the oven. "She said she fit right in," Williams said.

Asia

ASIAN BRIEFS

China investigates tainted dumplings

BEIJING (AP)—The Chinese government on Thursday said it had stopped production and exports from a company whose insecticide-tainted frozen dumplings sickened 10 people in Japan, in the latest crisis to tarnish China's food export business. Officials from China's export safety watchdog said a swift investigation was being conducted into products from Tianyang Food Processing. Japan's health ministry reported at least 10 people were sickened after eating the imported dumplings. Health ministry official Makoto Kanie said they had received other complaints, but none could be clearly linked to the dumplings.

Indonesian soldier kills Sumatran tiger

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—A soldier shot dead an endangered Sumatran tiger that was caught in a trap in western Indonesia, then skinned it and distributed its meat to villagers, a conservationist said Thursday. The incident happened Sunday in Tenggayun, a village in Riau province, after residents asked the soldier to help release the critically endangered animal from a pig snare, said Bastoni, an official with the Sumatran Tiger Conservation Program. "Instead, the soldier fired nine bullets to its body and head, and then asked villagers to skin the wild beast," he said, adding the man proceeded to dole out the meat and take home the tiger's pelt. Bastoni—who like many Indonesians goes by only one name—said he intends to file a complaint with the army.

Bangladesh court jails Islamic militants

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP)—A court in northwestern Bangladesh sentenced seven Islamic militants Thursday to life in prison after finding them guilty of carrying out a series of bombings in 2005, a prosecutor said. The men were involved in five separate attacks on Aug. 17, 2005, in Chapainawabganj, a town 145 miles west of Dhaka, Prosecutor Jahangir Mohammad Selim said, citing the judge's verdict. No one was injured in the five bombings. The men belonged to the Jumatul Mujahedeen Bangladesh group, which wants to establish strict Islamic rule in Bangladesh, a nation of 145 million people governed by secular laws.

Top al-Qaida figure killed in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—Abu Laith al-Libi, a top al-Qaida commander blamed for bombing an Afghan base while Vice President Cheney visited last year, was killed in Pakistan by an airstrike, a U.S. government official said Thursday.

Al-Libi

The strike was conducted by a Predator unmanned drone, the official said. It was carried out against a facility in north Waziristan, the lawless tribal area bordering Afghanistan. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to discuss the strike publicly.

An estimated 12 people were killed in the strike late Monday or early Tuesday, including Arabs, Turkeman from central Asia and local Taliban members, according to an intelligence official in the area who spoke on condition of anonymity. He said the bodies of those killed were badly mangled by the force of the explosion and it was difficult to identify them.

AP

A sick passenger is carried away from the crowd by police officers as thousands of passengers wait to get inside Guangzhou Railway Station in Guangzhou, in south China's Guangdong province Thursday, Jan. 31, 2008.

Chaotic rush to board a train home in China

GUANGZHOU, China (AP)—Hundreds of thousands of desperate travelers, some hoisting terrified children or baggage over their heads, pushed their way onto trains Thursday as service resumed after the worst winter storms in decades paralyzed China.

Piles of suitcases, dirty blankets, duffel bags, clothing and shoes, abandoned in the chaotic stampede, littered the rain-soaked train station in Guangzhou, the starting point for the busy rail line north to Beijing.

Railway officials said the restored service could carry 400,000 passengers a day, but hundreds of thousands of stranded people, most of them migrant workers, were still waiting to leave the city.

More streamed in every hour to try to catch a train home for next week's Chinese New Year in one of the world's biggest annual mass movements of people. A record 178.6 million people—more than the population of Russia—were expected to ride the rails. Most would be riding in "hard-seat class," in train cars with only hard wooden seats.

Suicide bomber kills Afghan official

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AP)—A suicide bomber blew himself up Thursday in a mosque in southern Afghanistan, killing a deputy provincial governor and five other people in another blow to President Hamid Karzai's U.S.-backed government.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack, which came as U.S. officials were warning that the six-year mission to stabilize Afghanistan faces a crisis due to Taliban resilience and weakening international resolve.

Pir Mohammad, deputy governor of Helmand province, was attending noon prayers at the mosque in the provincial capital of Lashkar Gah when the bomber struck, according to police chief Mohammad Hussein Andiwal.

At least 18 people, including two children, were wounded by the blast, Andiwal said.

World

WORLD BRIEFS

UN says more than 5M will lose jobs

GENEVA (AP)—More than 5 million people will lose their jobs this year as the world economy slows, an official at the U.N. labor agency said Thursday. Most job losses will occur in rich countries, but millions of "working poor" in the developing world who won't be counted also will suffer, said Dorothea Schmidt, an economist at the International Labor Organization. Schmidt said the latest global growth figures from the International Monetary Fund prompted the labor agency to review its jobs forecast for 2008. The Washington-based IMF cut its growth projection from 4.4 percent to 4.1 percent Tuesday. The Geneva-based ILO published a report last week predicting that the number of unemployed worldwide would increase to about 195 million from 190 million last year.

Aboriginal leaders to welcome lawmakers

CANBERRA, Australia (AP)—Aborigines have long lived on the fringe of Australian society, but they will take center stage when Parliament holds a historic ceremony to acknowledge the nation's capital is built on their land. On Thursday, Aboriginal leaders welcomed the latest step in a new era of indigenous relations in Australia. The first act of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's new government will be to ask Parliament on Feb. 13 to pass a motion apologizing for past policies of taking mostly mixed-race children from Aboriginal mothers to try to make them grow up like white Australians. And on Feb. 12, an Aboriginal elder, Matilda House, will welcome lawmakers to Parliament House and surrounding land inhabited by her Ngunnawal tribe before British settlers arrived in the 19th century.

Judge bans Holocaust float in Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (AP)—There will be no simulated pile of naked, emaciated corpses—and no dancing Hitler—at the world's biggest street party. A judge on Thursday blocked a carnival float meant to show that the Holocaust "gives you goose bumps." Workers began dismantling the float to rebuild it for this weekend's parade, television footage showed. Viradouro, the top Rio samba group responsible for the float, said it was designed to remind carnival-goers of past horrors to prevent them from happening again. But Jewish leaders were outraged.

Opposition lawmaker killed in Kenya

ELDORET, Kenya (AP)—A policeman shot and killed an opposition lawmaker Thursday in what authorities say was a crime of passion over a woman. But machete-wielding protesters convinced it was an assassination clashed with police, leaving at least three dead.

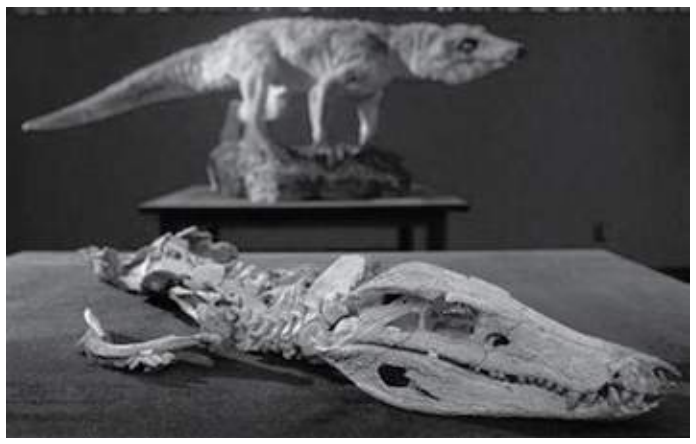
The fighting interrupted talks aimed at calming a nation gripped by violence since a disputed election a month ago.

At least one person died and 21 people were injured in this western city after the lawmaker's death. In Eldoret's main hospital, bloody trails led to overcrowded wards where bandaged victims shared dirty mattresses on the floor because there weren't enough beds.

Police said David Too was shot by a police officer who discovered the lawmaker was having an affair with his girlfriend. The woman - whom Too family members deny was linked to the politician - was shot in the same attack also died, a hospital official said.

Too was the second anti-government legislator killed in a week; opposition politicians said both were victims of assassination plots. A Too family spokesman accused the police of a cover-up, saying the lawmaker was not involved with the woman and had feared for his safety.

'Missing link' croc displayed in Brazil



AP

A prehistoric crocodile fossil is seen after a press conference at the Federal University in Rio de Janeiro, Thursday, Jan. 31, 2008.

SAO PAULO, Brazil (AP)—The fossil remains of a land-bound reptile described as a possible "missing link" between prehistoric and modern-day crocodiles were displayed to the public for the first time on Thursday.

The 80 million year-old fossil of a 5.6-foot long predator was found in 2004 near the small city of Monte Alto, about 215 miles northwest of Sao Paulo, paleontologist Felipe Mesquita de Vasconcellos said by telephone after presenting the find to a news conference at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro.

"As a missing link to prehistoric crocodiles, it offers us an excellent opportunity to study the evolutionary transition of these animals," Vasconcellos said.

Rockets hit British in southern Iraq

BAGHDAD (AP)—Violence returned Thursday to the southern city of Basra, where militants pummeled Britain's airport base with 20 rockets and British gunners answered with volleys of artillery. Civilians were killed and wounded in the crossfire.

In Baghdad, a bomb-rigged car blew apart at a bus stop, killing at least five people in a Shiite enclave that had not seen major violence in months.

The two attacks—in areas considered relatively stable—were troubling reminders that recent improvements in Iraqi security were fragile and far from deeply rooted.

The Basra battle also exposed potential security gaps around Iraq's second-largest city less than two months after a scaled-down British force handed over control to Iraqi police and military. Rival Shiite factions are locked in fierce struggles for dominance in Basra and the rest of the oil-rich south.

U.S. forces, meanwhile, have expanded offensives in central and northern Iraq, seeking to build on gains against al-Qaida in Iraq in the past year. But the latest campaigns also have driven up the military's death toll after months of decline.

Maharlika – PinoyNews

FASTEST GROWTH IN 31 YEARS

RP economy grew 7.3 pct. in '07

MANILA (Philippine Daily Inquirer)—Surpassing expectations, the Philippine economy as measured by the gross domestic product grew 7.3 percent in 2007, its best performance in more than three decades.

"As expected, the 7.3 percent full-year output expansion exceeded market expectations and is so far the strongest since the economy registered its peak of 8.8 percent in 1976," said Augusto Santos, acting director general of the National Economic and Development Authority.

The growth was well above the government's target of 6.1-6.7 percent and beat most forecasts by private sector economists. In 2006 the growth rate was 5.4 percent.

The high growth is expected to place the Philippines among the top five fastest-growing economies in Asia for 2007, the NEDA said. Neighboring countries have yet to announce their 2007 economic results.

The gross national product (GNP)—the GDP plus net factor income from abroad, which covers money remittances from overseas Filipino workers—grew 7.8 percent, the fastest rate since 1977.

Broad-based

Santos said the robust growth was broad-based, as all major sectors of the economy recorded faster expansion.

The agriculture, fisheries and forestry sector rose 5.1 percent last year, compared with 3.8 percent in 2006. The industry sector grew 6.6 percent (from 4.5 percent in 2006), and the services sector expanded 8.7 percent (from 6.7 percent in 2006).

The corn sub-sector grew 10.8 percent, banana 10.1 percent, and forestry 12.2 percent.

In the industry sector, mining and quarrying grew 25.0 percent, after a drop of 6.1 percent in 2006.

The growth in mining "is an indication that the government's effort to revive the mining industry is bearing fruit," Santos said in a statement.

Construction grew 19.6 percent, compared with 7.3 percent in 2006.

The services sector rose 8.7 percent. This sector, which includes the booming business process outsourcing sub-sector, had its fastest growth since 1987.

Almost all services sub-sectors registered faster growth: transportation and communications, 8.2 percent (compared with 6.3 percent in 2006); trade, 9.8 percent (6.1 percent in 2006), finance, 12.3 percent (11.4 percent in 2006); real estate, 6.0 percent (5.7 percent in 2006); private services, 8.8 percent (6.9 percent in 2006). Only government services registered a slowdown to 3.3 percent from 4.7 percent in 2006.

Government consumption, which pumped-prime the economy, grew 10.0 percent, the fastest pace since 1974, the NEDA said.

Economic officials said the government's improving revenue generation allowed it to spend more on social services and infrastructure.

The government raised P90 billion from the sale of assets last year, which helped it stay within its financial target for 2007 despite a shortfall in tax collection.

The government aimed to limit the budget deficit at P63 billion last year; but the Department of Finance has said the result will likely be a "small deficit" because of increased revenues. The budget deficit data are to be released next month.

Cheers for 2007 growth, caution on '08 prospects

By DAXIM LUCAS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA—Economists and business leaders Thursday cheered the strong 2007 economic growth numbers announced by the government but cautioned the public to brace for tougher times ahead amid lingering uncertainty about the state of the US economy.

"The results are above expectations," said Cayetano Paderanga Jr., who chairs the Institute for Development and Econometric Analysis (IDEA) Inc.

Paderanga, a former secretary of economic planning, earlier predicted that the value of the country's total economic output for last year would grow by 6.6 percent, due mainly to the strength of the services and mining sectors.

But he said growth this year would be dampened by "external factors," referring to the widely anticipated recession in the United States.

The Philippines has managed to diversify its base of trading partners in recent years, although the United States remains as its largest trading partner, taking the bulk of the country's electronics exports.

Alberto Lim, executive director Makati Business Club (MBC), which counts the heads of leading corporations as its members, welcomed the strong growth numbers but noted that they would make it difficult for the economy to sustain this year.

"We are starting 2008 from a very high base," Lim said, referring to the 2007 gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate. "This means that this year's growth will not be as spectacular as last year's."

"What they announced is already in the past," he said. "And that is not a good indicator of the future."

OPEN FORUM JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Federal Labor Ombudsman Jim Benedetto explain in a two-hour open forum hosted by the Philippine Consulate the impact on foreign workers of the pending federal legislation before more than a hundred guest workers and representatives of different Filipino groups at the Filipino Workers Resource Center on the ground floor of the Marianas Business Plaza in Susupe Thursday night.

Peso rallies to 40.55 per dollar

MANILA (Philippine Daily Inquirer)—The peso Thursday rallied to 40.55 to the dollar as a new 50-basis-point interest rate cut by the US Federal Reserve as well as the Philippines' better-than-expected economic growth report card for 2007 perked up the local financial markets.

The peso opened trading nearer the day's low of 40.77 to the dollar but closed near the day's peak at 40.54.

At that closing rate, the peso 0.17 from Wednesday's close of 40.72 to the greenback.

It is now trading close to the eight-year high of 40.50 recorded in mid-January.

The currency market welcomed the government's report of a faster-than-expected fourth-quarter growth in the gross domestic product (GDP) of 7.4 percent, catapulting the full-year 2007 growth to a 31-year high of 7.3 percent.

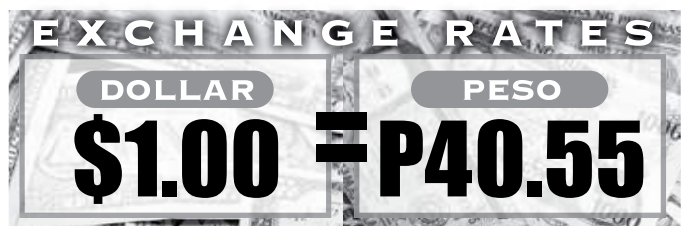
The peso was also supported by broad gains in regional currency markets following the half-percentage-point interest rate cut by the US Fed overnight.

After the Philippine currency market closed, the local central bank announced a smaller-than-expected 25-basis-point cut in its own interest rates, which meant that the widening interest rate differential was favoring the peso's further strengthening, currency dealers said.

The volume of trading on the currency spot market amounted to $680.55 million.

On the stock exchange, the main index rose by a modest 9.47 points to close at 3,266.

The peso's gains Thursday were tempered by continuing uncertainties on a US-led global economic slowdown, as some analysts feared that the aggressive Fed rate cuts—which totaled 125 basis points in two weeks—might indicate that the world's biggest economy was in a much worse situation than generally believed.



Convenience to the max in a one-stop OFW shop

By KENNETH DEL ROSARIO
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Laurence Recedo, the son of an OFW, needed to convert the dollar allowance he received from his mom to pesos while shopping for gifts over the holidays. Lucky for him, a money changer was right smack at the center of the mall he was in.

After getting his pesos, this 25-year-old call center agent whose mother is general manager of an ice cream parlor in Hawaii, was surprised to find that he did not have to go elsewhere to surf the Internet or pay his phone bills. He was inside an OFW Pamilya Center.

Located in Robinson's Mall Dasmariñas in Cavite, the center has a remittance company, a money changer, an Internet shop and a telecommunications establishment—all primary services that OFWs and their families need regularly. All of them are in a zone also housing recruitment and travel agencies, pre-need institutions, real estate enterprises and a courier service, among others.

"It was really convenient for me," Laurence said. "The fact that every thing that I needed was in one place inside a mall makes for a very innovative, exciting affair."

Two months after its opening last November, the OFW Pamilya Center in Dasmariñas follows the first inaugurated by Robinson's in Imus a month earlier. It has already serviced the needs of thousands of overseas workers and their families.

Impasse could scuttle talks with rebels

AP

Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebels man a rebel-controlled checkpoint at Sultan Kudarat province in southern Philippines in this 2005 file photo.

By OLIVER TEVES
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A new impasse could scuttle years of peace talks between the Philippine government and Muslim separatists and reverse recent gains against al-Qaida-linked militants in the violence-torn south.

Rebel negotiators refused to attend a planned meeting in December, accusing the government of going back on previously settled points.

The breakdown threatens negotiations that have brought the two sides close to agreement on creating an autonomous Muslim territory in the southern Mindanao region, the traditional homeland of Muslims in the Philippines.

If the impasse drags on, the more militant groups in Mindanao could exploit it to win new recruits and derail the peace process, analysts and negotiators warned.

The government, through a mix of military operations and humanitarian aid, has weakened the extremists and killed or captured several top leaders in recent years with the help of U.S. troops, said terrorism analyst Kit Collier from the Australian National University.

But this two-pronged strategy may not hold without a peace accord, he said.

"Until the peace process is seen as a vital third prong in the counterterrorism campaign, I don't think the successes are likely to be sustainable," Collier told reporters in Manila recently.

An armed rebellion for Muslim self-rule in Mindanao erupted in the 1970s. The fighting has killed 120,000 civilians and combatants, displaced tens of thousands and slowed economic development of the resource-rich region.

Muslims make up about 5 percent of the predominantly Christian country's population of 90 million. They are a minority even in Mindanao following decades of Christian migration encouraged by the government.

Some rebels went to Afghanistan in the 1980s to join Islamic groups fighting the Soviet occupation. They formed links with radicals there and organized a militant group, Abu Sayyaf, after returning to the Philippines.

Abu Sayyaf and its Indonesia-based ally, Jemaah Islamiyah, have been blamed for bombings and kidnappings in the south and Manila. One bomb set off a fire on a ferry in Manila Bay in 2004, killing 116.

Migrant group raps financial program for OFWs

By JEROME ANING
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA—"Parasitic and discriminatory" was how a Filipino migrants group in the Middle East has described the financial program launched by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in the United Arab Emirates over the weekend.

The program, including a hedging facility, is aimed at preserving the value of the remittances overseas Filipino workers make to their loved ones in the Philippines in the wake of the declining value of the US dollar against the peso.

"This hedging [facility] they launched only shows the administration is not aware of our real situation," said Migrante-UAE secretary general Nhel Morona in a statement from Dubai.

Morona said that most OFWs in the Middle East earned an average of $500 a month. Under the hedge fund, to be managed by the Development Bank of the Philippines, a minimum $10,000 is needed to avail oneself of a favorable peso-dollar exchange rate.

Troops kill militant accused of killing priest

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A Muslim militant who allegedly gunned down a Roman Catholic priest in a raid on a school in the southern Philippines was killed Thursday in a clash with troops pursuing an Indonesian terror suspect, the military said.

Troops recovered the body of suspected Abu Sayyaf commander Wahab Upao after an hourlong clash in Panglima Sugala township in remote Tawi-Tawi province, said marine commandant Maj. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino.

Upao was suspected of being part of a group that raided a Catholic school in Tawi-Tawi on Jan. 15 and fatally shot priest Reynaldo Roda and seized two hostages, Dolorfino said.

"There could be other Abu Sayyaf casualties, but only his body was recovered," he told The Associated Press.

There were no casualties on the government side, he said.

A separate military field report on the incident had slightly different details.

Troops raided the suspected hide-out of top Indonesian terrorist suspect Dulmatin in Tawi-Tawi's Balimbing township, but he escaped, said armed forces spokesman Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro, citing the report.

Senate: Palace hiding Neri

By ALLISON LOPEZ, DONA PAZZIBUGAN, MICHAEL LIM UBAC
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA—Malacañang is helping Romulo Neri hide so he can stay mum on the National Broadband Network (NBN) scandal in which President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's husband is implicated, Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano said Thursday.

According to Cayetano, hiding Neri is part of the Palace's "stop-investigations move" in order to push through with the NBN project even if it will no longer be awarded to China's ZTE Corp.

"There's no doubt about it that Malacañang does not want Secretary Neri and others to testify..." Cayetano said on the sidelines of the investiture of United Opposition spokesperson Adel Tamano as president of Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila.

He pointed out that Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita had said on television on Wednesday night that whistle-blower Jose "Joey" de Venecia III or any of the Palace's allies should not talk about the NBN-ZTE issue anymore.

"If they have nothing to hide, why should their allies not speak about it?" Cayetano said.

Senate Sergeant at Arms Jose Balajadia warned that anyone hiding Neri was obstructing justice and would be dealt with accordingly.

Not hiding

Neri denied he was in hiding and said he was not a fugitive.

"I don't think so. I'm not in hiding," he said when reached by the Philippine Daily Inquirer by phone. He declined to say where he was though.

Neri said he was hoping the Senate would reconsider its decision to have him arrested since he had filed a petition for certiorari against the chamber in the Supreme Court.

"Normally, when there is a dispute between the legislative and the executive branches of government, the issue is brought before the Supreme Court," he said.

Neri again denied that he had executed an affidavit or a videotape testimony on what he knew about the broadband project scandal, as reported by the Inquirer.

Sergio Apostol, the President's chief legal counsel, said it was not the Palace's business to coddle missing officials like Neri.

De Venecia buys time

By NORMAN BORDADORA, MICHAEL LIM UBAC
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Embattled Speaker Jose de Venecia Thursday said he had won the support of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in his battle to keep his post --apparently in exchange for the silence of his son, Joey de Venecia III, on the scandal-smeared ZTE telecommunications deal.

"I'm happy to say that President Arroyo confirmed in earnest terms her support for my continued stay as Speaker ... She would like a status quo," De Venecia said after a meeting with Ms Arroyo in Malacañang amid moves by her allies in the House of Representatives to unseat him.

Will tell family to back off

De Venecia said Ms Arroyo said she'd impress upon her family—husband Jose Miguel Arroyo, sons Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo and Camarines Sur Rep. Diosdado Macapagal-Arroyo, as well as brother-in-law Negros Occidental Rep. Ignacio Arroyo --her support for him as House leader.

"She stressed to me that she will talk to (them)... that she is committed to support me."

De Venecia said Ms Arroyo personally told him that the campaign of Davao City Rep. Prospero Nograles to wrest the speakership was unauthorized.

"She confirmed in the strongest terms that she had not authorized the campaign of Nograles," De Venecia said.

AP

FARMERS' PROTEST

Protesting farmers are blocked by police as they try to march towards the presidential palace Thursday, Jan. 31, 2008, in Manila, Philippines, to demand their leader be released from jail. The farmers also called for the non-extension of the government sponsored land reform bill which they claim is not benefiting the farmers and to stop the alleged militarization of the countryside.

Maharlika – PinoyStyle

The Greta chronicles

By THE INQUIRER ENTERTAINMENT STAFF
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—There's trouble in paradise and it's being milked for all its worth.

For the past two months, there have been "persistent and consistent" rumors (the exact words of a close friend of one of the protagonists) about the reported breakup of controversial beauty Gretchen Barretto and her longtime partner, business mogul Tonyboy Cojuangco.

Last weekend, the rumor mill went on hyper-drive. Gossip

Gretchen Barretto

has since gone beyond show biz, to high-society circles: The actress had been thrown out of the conjugal home.

A source close to Tonyboy insisted that he was still "very much in love with her, but decided to set her free." Another colleague asked, pointedly: "Is freedom the new euphemism for being dumped?"

A lot of ink has been spilled, mostly on blind items. But of late, the three protagonists have been named on radio and TV, and in print.

Previously described as "another rich and powerful businessman," Gretchen's purported new boyfriend has been identified in several tabloids as Dodie Puno. He was earlier linked to a beauty queen and a sexy actress. (Sexy actress denies this.)

A Cojuangco associate intimated that there could be another reason for the separation: a beautiful "reason," on legs. A new lady love?

Last Christmas, he was spotted at Simbang Gabi in the ABC 5 compound, which he owns. Did he complete the novena and what could he have wished for?

An employee told Rushes that Tonyboy had admired pretty young stars Kristine Hermosa and Marian Rivera in the past. A friend of his whispered that, indeed, the businessman had found a new paramour— a "singer-actress who had a boob job." But she's the exact opposite of porcelain-beauty Barretto, and already has a model-boyfriend! The friend insisted that Boob Babe found time to "seduce" the businessman.

Still another associate was skeptical: Tonyboy had two major surgeries last year. How could he fool around?

An ABS-CBN insider was sure that Cojuangco was actively pursuing a Kapamilya actress separated from her hunk of a husband.

What we know

On the ABS-CBN chismis show "The Buzz," host Boy Abunda, Barretto's manager, sounded seriously concerned, even as he stressed he was not fully informed of the details. Co-host Cristy Fermin said "a general" had urged her to go easy on her comments about the controversy.

RUSHES

No need to fret about Gretchen-in-trouble stories

By the Inquirer Entertainment Staff
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INQUIRER.NET

MANILA—Before you start getting worked up about the brewing scandal on Gretchen Barretto's purported breakup with partner Tonyboy Cojuangco, listen: This could just be because a new TV series is supposedly being cooked. Wait and watch.

An unimpeachable source tells Rushes that Gretchen met with a top female executive of ABS-CBN last week.

The source goes as far as saying, "Whenever Gretchen has a new project (whether on the big or small screens), she uses it as leverage [against] her partner."

An associate of the businessman's insists that everything was "okay."

Judai bypassed

Is Judy Ann Santos feeling slighted that, for the third year in a row, Star Cinema is not supporting her bid for the Box Office Queen title?

Two years ago, Kristine Hermosa ("Enteng Kabisote 2") cinched the title. Then, Claudine Barretto and Kris Aquino ("Sukob") shared the honor.

This year, Star Cinema is reportedly grooming Bea Alonzo as BO champ.

The question remains: Will Bea and John Lloyd Cruz's "One More Chance" make more moolah in the end than Judai and Ryan Agoncillo's "Sakal"?

Will this latest oversight push Judai and Ryan to move to GMA 7, too?

What about Anne?

There are also reports that Viva is pulling out Anne Curtis from ABS-CBN.

Is it because she is being considered for the Darna role on GMA 7, side by side with former flame Richard Gutierrez as Captain Barbell?

Where does this development leave Marian Rivera, who is also vying for the Pinay superheroine role? Sources say, however, that Marian is a lock for the Dyesebel role.

■■■

Top of the talk shows

For those who missed TV's gabfests last weekend. (And why we are moved, if we are moved.)

■ Katrina Halili, on being pitted against Iwa Moto as sexiest male magazine cover girl: "Hindi ko alam. Bale sa akin, wala naman akong competition sa lahat ng ginagawa ko. Siguro 'yung mga tao lang ang nagsasabi."

■ Alfred Vargas, on reports ex-girlfriend LJ Reyes is dating another man: "Di naman ako nabigla kasi kung babae ka nga naman tapos maganda ka, matalino ka, mabait ka pa, siguro natural lang." (Good answer.)

■ Lian Paz's wish for ex-boyfriend Mark Herras: "Sana maging masaya na po siya at saka mag-move on na rin. I-let go na namin yung sama ng loob sa isa't isa." (Just do it for yourself, girl.)

■ Mark asked for further comment on Lian: "Ayoko muna, kasi ngayon magulo na. Mahirap magsalpukan baka sumabog lang lalo." (Huh? Run, girl, and don't look back!)

■ Jolo Revilla on courting Lovi Poe: "Actually, bigla na lang ito dumating. Bigla na lang … siyempre hindi naman natin iniisip na darating 'yun, bigla na lang darating. Kumbaga dumating na lang doon sa point na hindi ko nalalaman biglang ganoon na." (Shaks, biglang-bigla naman 'yan.)

■ Lovi Poe, on the courtship: "Ayoko pang magsalita ng patapos because we'll never know what's gonna come. I just hope everything goes well. So far Jolo and I are still getting to know each other. We're good as friends. If it gets better, everybody will know naman." (At least, 'di siya nabigla, ano?)

■ Mark Herras, on romantic links with Nadia Montenegro's daughter, Yna: "Hindi, hindi. Family ko sila eh. Ayokong may magalit sa akin; at the same time, ayokong magalit sa akin si Tita Nadia or sino man, 'di ba? Ni-rerespeto ko ang family nila. I'm happy dahil nagiging part ako ng family nila lalo na sa mga bata. Ok na ako doon." (Okay, forget it.)

■ Aiko Melendez on Martin Jickain: "Sobrang okay na ang lahat. Kami ni Martin, nag-tetext na kami, civil na kami. So every time may kailangan siya with regard to Marthena, sinasagot ko nang maayos. Kumbaga, may closure na. If we didn't work out as husband and wife, we need to save the friendship at least for Marthena." (Next time, guys, keep it really, really private. Ay, next time daw, o.)

■ Mark Anthony Fernandez, admitting a "fling" with Rosanna Roces eight years ago: "'Yung sa dad ko, hindi totoo 'yun. Ako 'yun. Parang fling-fling lang din. Seven, eight years back. So, it wasn't my dad; it was me."

■ Cristine Reyes, asked if she had gone out on dates with Willie Revillame: "Group [dates, yes] and never po kaming lumabas na kaming dalawa lang po. At saka anong masama 'di ba dahil single naman ako. Pero lilinawin ko lang po na wala kaming relasyon and pag lumalabas kami kasama 'yung mga staff niya, ako kasama ko si ate. Marami kami. Sweet kasi talaga si Willie. Wala naman akong masabing masama sa kanya." (Stay where you are, girl.)

Sources: Startalk, The Buzz, Showbiz Central

PERSONAL FINANCE

Investing all your savings in a condo?

Question: I am an OFW based in Italy. I have been working here for 10 years now and I have been regularly sending money to my parents back in Manila to help them with their daily expenses. But I have also been saving for my future, keeping it in money market accounts. With the nice condominium projects being built now in Manila, I'm deciding between putting my savings in a condo unit or just continuing to invest my money in the money market. Which one do you think would be better?—Rommel

Answer: We are very happy, Rommel, to learn that you have been saving. Many OFWs hardly have savings with most of their remittances spent for daily expenses of their families back home. Then when their contracts have ended or when they retire, they go back to the Philippines and find that they have nothing saved up for the future.

Saving is very important in ensuring one's financial stability. We can't always work for the rest of our lives, so it's wise to save for future expenses such as health care and retirement. Some people reason out that with their meager income, they can't afford to save. But the reality is, no one can afford not to save.

We don't know how old you are, or how many years you have been saving, or how many years you have until retirement. Regardless of those, continue your savings habit. It will be your safety net in the future.

Diversification is the name of the game

As to your question: which one is better—condo or cash?

A key principle in investment is diversification. Over the years, successful investors have built up their wealth by observing this key principle.

Diversification is making sure that your wealth is not tied up in any one kind of asset. That means it is not all in money market placements. It's not all in stocks or bonds. It's not all in jewelry or classic cars. Diversification means your assets are spread out in a number of wisely chosen investments that you are comfortable with in terms of the risk involved so that when one asset class is down or is losing, you still have some assets that are earning money for you.

The real estate industry in the country is on the upswing. Condominiums and housing projects are being aggressively built and sold. Real estate companies have also been actively pursuing the OFW market, going on marketing and sales blitzes abroad.

But this has not always been the case. Back in the late 90s, the real estate industry suffered greatly as a result of the Asian financial crisis. Real estate properties are also subject to market ups and downs, like any other asset class.

This is why we advise you to not put all your savings in a condominium unit. You may, of course, invest in a condominium unit, but make sure that you also have other investments in other kinds of assets, such as money market placements, and bond funds or stock funds. With this strategy, your financial future will be better preserved and protected in the long run.

Investing in real estate

If you decide to purchase a condominium unit while still investing your savings in other asset classes, you will soon realize that you're spoiled for choice. Real estate companies are now offering good deals, such as affordable payment schemes and easy payment options even for OFWs based abroad.

There are also a lot of good projects being built on good locations within Metro Manila and key cities in the provinces. Do your research first on location, pricing, quality, and suitability to your needs and aesthetic tastes.

Along with purchasing a condominium unit come other costs: monthly condominium and association dues, annual real estate taxes, and annual fire and property insurance. Take these things into consideration in evaluating whether you'd really want to buy a condominium unit, as these may drive up the cost of purchase.

Deal only with reputable companies. You want to make sure that the condominium project will be finished as scheduled and will be built well following safety guidelines. Ask around for the developer's reputation.

Investing in other assets

As to your other investment options, don't limit yourself to money market placements. Look into bonds or stocks for higher potential income. If you don't have enough funds to meet the minimum investment required in these assets, then join a fund investing in these assets.

Again, look into the financial company offering these funds first to see how they have been faring. Compare funds before investing.

Bonds or stocks or pooled funds investing in these are good investments because they are liquid. That means they can be turned to cash easily should you need it. That's also one other reason why you have to diversify your assets. Just think: if all your money is tied up in a condo unit, what happens now if you suddenly need some cash to tide you over a job loss or illness in the family? It's not easy to convert property into cash right away since you still need to find an interested buyer. Whereas if you have some investment in property, and some in liquid assets such as stocks, you can have the stocks sold today if necessary.

So remember the key: diversification. We wish you the best!

INQUIRER.net and Citibank invite readers to ask questions regarding financial matters. Send your questions to personal_finance@inquirer.net. Readers are solely responsible for their own investment decisions and should thus conduct their own research and due diligence and obtain professional advice. INQUIRER.net will not be liable for any loss or damage caused by a reader's reliance on information obtained from our web site.

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Maharlika – Opinyon

Letter to the Editor

The news on 'booming economy' turns reader's stomach

Editor's Note: The following letter was initially published in the Feb. 2, 2008 edition of the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

"Arroyo: Our economy is booming." (Inquirer, 1/24/08) The moment I read the news, my stomach turned. Really, Ms President, our economy is booming? How come? My personal experience is: I'm still working abroad, my family complains of the rising prices of basic commodities. And because I have to support my family and send my kids to school, I don't see myself settling or going back home in the next 10 years.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo must be dreaming. And how insensitive for her to say that money remittances from overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), because these allow our kids to go to school, are helping expand our country's manpower and raise its quality. To become what, Ms President? To become OFWs like us?

Instead of dreaming, the President should take concrete steps to bring us home by creating jobs that pay decently so that we can afford to stay with our dear families. Why not adopt a policy of genuine national industrialization instead of selling out our natural resources at international bargain?

I don't see a booming economy; what I see is my children becoming OFWs just like me. There are no basic industries being put up that would employ my children in the future, right here in the country. What I see is a sellout of our young to foreign labor markets, because the Arroyo administration has no serious policy to industrialize or plan to reverse the policy of labor export.

The foundation of a robust and booming economy is local manufacturing and consumption. Right now, our economy imports too much, thus killing our local industries and agriculture and displacing millions of workers.

Our economy is not booming. It is buoyed up by OFW remittance; and our peso is getting stronger not because of the President but despite her stinking economic policy of labor exportation.

Phetz Zantua
via email

Vision and leadership

GLIMPSES

By JOSE MA. MONTELIBANO
INQUIRER.net

Responses may be sent to jlmg-limpses@gmail.com.

It has been said time and again that Philippine politics has been largely devoid of vision and leadership. Because of these shortcomings, poverty and corruption are claimed to be the natural consequences.

What could possibly be the missing vision, the desired leadership? What is it that Filipinos long for, the state of affairs approximating their ideals, the virtues comprising inspiring leadership?

I am sure that there will be many descriptions of both vision and leadership, but I am just as sure that most of them will carry the same spirit, if not the same form. However, the fact that Filipinos can be quarrelsome, disorderly, or do not follow simple instructions (like traffic rules) creates a false impression that we have more differences than commonalities. In truth, we have more commonalities than differences. What is sad, though, is that a few differences become more important than the many commonalities.

In legends that highlight the histories of many nations, symbolism becomes the medium that best contains the deeper longings or highest ideals of people. My favorite is Camelot. Somehow, the thought of noble knights using their strength and courage to further the cause of nobility, chivalry, equality and justice is particularly appealing to me as a Filipino with unrequited aspirations. The mess that we have brought on ourselves, especially ushered by leadership after leadership that lacks not only breadth of vision but also strength of character, makes me equate ourselves to the hapless commoner of England run by warlords more than by wise men.

Camelot told the story of Arthur who was anointed by the gods despite his innocence and simplicity. When Arthur drew the sword Excalibur, embedded in a rock after all others who tried had failed, it was affirmed that supernatural forces chose Arthur, rather than Arthur wanting or choosing to be king. The special anointment was a crucial ingredient to show destiny and collaboration between the heavens and earth, to present the drama between gods and men.

The political scenario of the days preceding Arthur's Camelot indicated constant bickering and fighting among different groups, so similar to what has plagued Filipinos for so long. The legend also spoke of attacks by foreigners, exploitation by the more powerful, and a general environment of inequality and their brand of poverty. In other words, it was a situation which looked for a vision and a leader to battle the discords of warring groups, to set the example of bravery and nobility, and to introduce the concept of freedom and equality.

Though poverty and misery might have been a familiar sight to the people of England, it was not an economic program that comprised the vision of Arthur. It was happiness he sought for his subjects, a kingdom where right was might, where the law protected the innocent and punished the guilty. It was a vision for a people long victimized by strife, long exploited by greed, long punished by the injustice of a system that gave a few the right to misrule the many. The ordinary people of England yearned for their Camelot, for their heaven on earth. They yearned for their leader, their hope, their deliverer.

What leadership, then, did they look for? If the problem was not just economic, was not just political, was not just social, was not just religious, what kind of leadership would it take to allow a grand vision to find fruition? It had to be steeped in what is good and where that good defeats evil. It had to be brave and consistent, where might is right and right is also might and able to defeat the enemy. It had to be pure and noble, where acts of courage go beyond prowess for battle and reach heroism where one lays down one's life for a friend, or even for the least of his fellowman.

The commoner, or their Juan de la Cruz, looked for leadership inside a vision, looked for vision inside a leadership. Vision and leadership became fused, one impossible without the other, each completely faithful to the other. It was a leadership that was anchored on principle, but deeper still and ready for sacrifice that is grounded on pure spirit, on what is sacred. When the leadership saw the people and their highest aspirations, the vision and the manner by which vision it was to be achieved lost all dichotomy. One, indeed, was the other. It was the only way.

In more modern times, a communications guru said that "the medium is the message," and so proclaimed that the message and the messenger are one and the same, that vision and leadership cannot be any less. The vision seeks no program, no strategy, no technology; instead, it seeks the leadership whose fidelity to vision is the only way for the vision to find life in the imagination and hopes of the people.

In these times, Filipinos cry for their Camelot. They dream it, they pursue it, and they will have it. The land of our dreams will be the arena of our great pursuit. The wandering will be over when the leadership will find Arthur, the innocent but the brave, the dreamer and the warrior. Arthur sees Camelot in his mind and in his heart. He knows Camelot is the birthright of his people, the state he must lead them to. And he knows that he is anointed, the only one who can wield Excalibur -- and only when he is faithful to his destiny.

It has simply become the season for our Camelot and our Arthur. They will burst on the scene rather than grow from it. They will be like lightning and thunder, instruments and agents of divine forces, not trees emerging from the earth. They will defy what is and insist on what can be.

The vision will be like a dream, beautiful beyond belief and believable only in dreams. But Arthur has no other vision, no other mission, no other reason for being but to make a noble spirit find flesh. Our Camelot and our Arthur are just around the corner, the next page in our history, a page that will change our history. We only need to believe. We only need to want them deeply, to want them powerfully. And when we see them, we only need to embrace them and never let them go.

Freedom 101

THERE'S THE RUB

By CONRADO DE QUIROS
Inquirer

Jose Diokno Jr. and Maria Ressa Had some very interesting things to say at the press conference after the filing of the media suits against Eduardo Ermita et al. last Monday.

Threats are easy to make, said Diokno, because you don't really have to specify the reasons for them. Their vagueness is their potency. "When the government makes threats, it is even more problematic because it has the coercive power to back up those threats." Left unchallenged, those threats supplant due process and dictate the course of things.

The threats issued variously by Eduardo Ermita, Raul Gonzalez, Ronaldo Puno, Hermogenes Esperon, Avelino Razon and several other officials—not least of mayhem to befall reporters who "get in the way"—prevent journalists from doing their job, which prevents the public in turn from knowing what's going on. In the end, Diokno says, the suits against these public officials are not just meant to defend the freedom of the press, they are meant to defend the freedom of the people.

Dwelling on a similar point, Ressa noted that her organization could have let government's threats, and actions, slide by, but that would have brought with it disastrous consequences. "We know that if we do nothing, we help destroy press freedom." Since Proclamation 1017, she said, the government has tried to mount one obstacle after another in the media's path. Press freedom, she said, is only as good as journalists are willing to fight for it.

I've harped on the same themes myself over the past few years, and I'm very glad to see some fundamental truths about them reaffirmed, or indeed cast more forcefully, in these terms.

It's true, the price of liberty is eternal vigilance, as abolitionist Wendell Philips said way back in the 19th century, and press freedom is only as good as journalists are willing to fight for it. I remember that in one of our discussions on the class suit filed by journalists against Mike Arroyo, lawyer Harry Roque wondered if the tack of having the journalists themselves testifying before the court about the chilling effects of Arroyo's own libel suit against them wasn't counterproductive. Surely Arroyo's lawyers could argue that the fact that the journalists could go out and say those things was proof his libel suit had not sufficiently chilled them?

Not so, I argued. The fact that the journalists could go out and say those things proved only that the journalists were defiant, not that government was tolerant. We do have press freedom, but that is not because of government, that is because of the journalists themselves.

Indeed, if we continue to have it now, it is only because the media refused to be cowed after government attempted to muzzle them with 1017, threatening to arrest transgressors. The Inquirer immediately condemned the threat in an editorial next day, as well indeed as several journalists in a media forum at ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. that same night. I have little doubt that if those countermoves had not been taken, or taken belatedly, government would have trampled all over press freedom more relentlessly than a herd of stampeding cattle.

Press freedom is only as good as journalists are willing to fight for it. And they have. They are. Every time Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo tells the world in her sojourns abroad that her country has one of the freest presses in the world, you want to say, "That is no thanks to you."

Today, as the class suits show, the journalists aren't just defending press freedom, they are fighting back. Luis Teodoro and several other media pillars emphasized the importance of the legal action, an unprecedented one, by saying that the world is watching, what happens to this case "will become a model for other countries and journalists in the same situation." But I myself see it as having the most vital lessons to impart not just to the world but to this country itself. Not just to other journalists but to Filipinos as a whole.

Press freedom is only as good as journalists are willing to fight for it. By the same token, all democratic freedoms are only as good as the people are willing to fight for them. That is true even under normal circumstances. The strength of the Western democracies does not lie in their having a strong government—or, heaven forbid, a strong republic -- it lies in their having a strong people. It lies in people willing to defend their rights, or more graphically in New Yorkers belligerently refusing to take s**t from anybody. That is the kind of vigilance, the feisty, prickly, touch-me-not (which is what "noli me tangere" means, though Jose Rizal meant that ironically) kind that allows liberty to push out like a flower from under the rubble.

What is true in normal circumstances is truer in tyrannical times. That is where Diokno's and Ressa's points resonate loudly. In tyrannical times, doing nothing in the face of oppression is in fact doing something: It is helping to murder yourself. It is participating in your own homicide.

You do not challenge the threats from government, as Diokno warns, those threats become policy by default or fait accompli and decree the way of things. This is not a case of "sticks and bones may break my bones but words won't." This is a case where words become sticks and stones and break bones, the bone-breaking often taking on the most literal aspects.

We do not have to go very far to see that. We currently have someone occupying Malacañang on the strength of words, or three words in particular: "lapse in judgment." We never challenged them, and they decreed the way of things. To paraphrase the Bible, the word was made flesh, and the flesh was ugly.

"We (journalists) know that if we do nothing, we destroy press freedom." When will the rest of us know that if we do nothing, we destroy our freedom?

Maharlika – Samu't Sari

FORUM ON FEDERALIZATION BILL

Hundreds of CNMI guest workers and leaders of Filipino groups gather at the Filipino Workers Resource Center at the ground floor of the Marianas Business Plaza in Susupe for the open forum with Federal Labor Ombudsman Jim Benedetto Thursday night.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Labor Representative Joan Lourdes Lavilla, Fe Calixterio and CNMI guest workers listen during an open forum with Federal Labor Ombudsman Jim Benedetto hosted by the Philippine Consulate General.

CNMI guest workers and leaders of Filipino groups look at Ron Hodges as he asks a question during the forum.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Irene Tantiado asks a question during the open forum Thursday night.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Filipino guest workers pose questions to Federal Labor Ombudsman Jim Benedetto during the open forum Thursday night.

President of the CNMI Human Dignity Movement Jerry Custodio gives his appreciation to Federal Labor Ombudsman Jim Benedetto for gracing the open forum Thursday night.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Philippine Consulate General Wilfredo DL. Maximo listen to Federal Labor Ombudsman Jim Benedetto during the open forum.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Bayani Association members gather for a group photo after the open forum with Federal Labor Ombudsman Jim Benedetto Thursday night.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Youngstyle

Dark memories, bright dreams

(c) 2008, The Washington Post

Three years ago, a disastrous wave called a tsunami, unleashed by an underwater earthquake, washed over South Asia. More than 200,000 people died; many more lost their homes and possessions.

As part of the healing process, the American Red Cross gave cameras to 80 children in Sri Lanka and Indonesia, two of the hardest-hit countries, and asked them to photograph what their lives are like today.

"After the tsunami was a painful period," said one of the children, Nova Safrianti, 11, of Aceh Jaya in Indonesia. "There were so many victims. ... There was also a lack of food, but we were able to eat because we shared food among other survivors."

While their words recall the terror of the tsunami (pronounced soo-NAHM-ee), their photographs reveal hope that recovery is underway in this beautiful part of the world.

Azura Helmahera, 10, at her house in Banda Aceh, Indonesia:

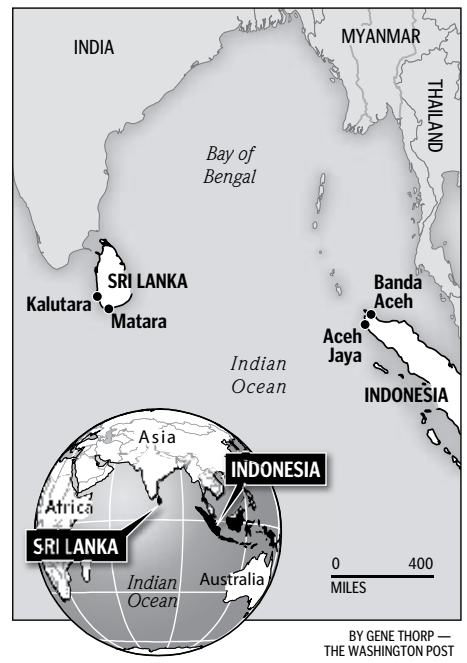
"The boy is my close friend and neighbor. ... We all remember how the tsunami swept everyone away. They did not have food for a few days and also were not able to go to school. When I went back to school, I found that many of my friends had died."

Nur Khalid Akbar, 11, at a schoolyard in Banda Aceh:

"The boys are my best friends who survived. ... I saw the tsunami directly and remember climbing to the second floor of my house, which still got hit by the waves. ... My father was not with us, so we thought he died. However, we found my father, and the whole family survived."

Left, Raveen Pramudith snaps his "younger brother sitting on the rock in deep thought" at Polhena Beach in Matara, Sri Lanka. Right, Azura Helmahera's portrait of a friend at her house in Banda Aceh, Indonesia.

THE WASHINGTON POST



BY GENE THORP — THE WASHINGTON POST

The American Red Cross gave cameras to 80 children in Sri Lanka and Indonesia, countries hardest-hit by the 2004 tsunami, and asked them to photograph what their lives are like today. Top, Nur Khalid Akbar captures his "best friends who survived" at a schoolyard in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. Bottom, G.M. Kavinda Krishan Fernando photographs a market scene in Kalutara, Sri Lanka.

THE WASHINGTON POST

G.M. Kavinda Krishan Fernando, 10, near a market in Kalutara, Sri Lanka:

"He was a very old man carrying a heavy sack, and I felt sad for him. But the heavy sack will help him earn money for his livelihood."

Raveen Pramudith, 12, at Polhena Beach in Matara, Sri Lanka:

"I was playing ... on the beach when I saw my younger brother sitting on the rock in deep thought. I wanted to take this picture with the beauty of the beach. ... When the tsunami hit Sri Lanka, my family and I were frightened and ran to my grandmother's house. One of my aunts couldn't walk, so she stayed in our house but passed away. We lost all of our belongings. ... Our village was not as beautiful as it was before, and it was full of darkness."

SUPER BOWL QUIZ

Are you a football fanatic? Take our quiz and see if you're ready for the big game Sunday between the New England Patriots and the New York Giants. All of the questions are true/false, so you have a 50 percent chance of scoring on each one.

1. Of the previous 41 Super Bowls, the National Football Conference has won more often.
2. The Patriots have won four Super Bowls.
3. There has never been an overtime in a Super Bowl.
4. The team that wins the coin toss usually wins the game.
5. Giants quarterback Eli Manning and his brother Peyton, who went to the Super Bowl last year, are the first brothers to reach the Super Bowl.
6. Giants punter Jeff Feagles will set a record the minute he steps on the field Sunday.
7. Patriots quarterback Tom Brady is one of only two players with multiple Super Bowl Most Valuable Player awards.
8. The MVP award usually goes to a quarterback.
9. The Patriots have 20 players with Super Bowl experience; the Giants have none.
10. If the Patriots win, they'll be the first team to go undefeated all season, including the playoffs.

ANSWERS: 1. True (21-20); 2. False (they've won three); 3. True; 4. False (the winner of the toss is 19-22); 5. False (there have been 18 sets of brothers); 6. True (as the oldest person to play in a Super Bowl, age 41); 7. False (he's one of four, with Bart Starr, Joe Montana and Terry Bradshaw); 8. True (about half the time); 9. False (the Giants have three); 10. False (the 1972 Miami Dolphins were 17-0, capping their season with a win over the Washington Redskins in Super Bowl VII).

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THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

Bubble Gum Day

Feb. 1 is Bubble Gum Day, when you can chew for a good cause. At many schools, students can pay 50 cents on Friday to chew gum, with the money going to a designated charity. (Ask your teacher first.) Why, it's the best idea since the invention of bubble gum. In 1928, Walter Diemer was experimenting with new flavors when one batch unexpectedly turned out less sticky and more stretchy. It was perfect for blowing bubbles—and 80 years later, for raising money!

(c) 2008, The Washington Post

Brushing up on good habits

(c) 2008, The Washington Post

We are on the cusp of National Children's Dental Health Month. You should brush and floss your teeth every day, but if you've been a bit lazy, February is a good time to get back on track to a happy, healthy smile.

The Dr. Samuel D. Harris National Museum of Dentistry in Baltimore wants to help. Museum officials will be at Port Discovery on Feb. 2 to show you how to brush and floss properly.

Maybe you'll be inspired to take better care of your teeth if you see one of George Washington's dentures. The museum has one of his lower dental plates. It was carved from hippo ivory and doesn't look very comfortable. Some historians think that's why his face appears pinched in some portraits.

On Feb. 17 from 1 to 4 p.m. you can tour the museum for $1 and learn all about dental care in Colonial times. There will be a costumed Washington reenactor and special treats in honor of the first president's birthday. (Don't forget to brush afterward!)

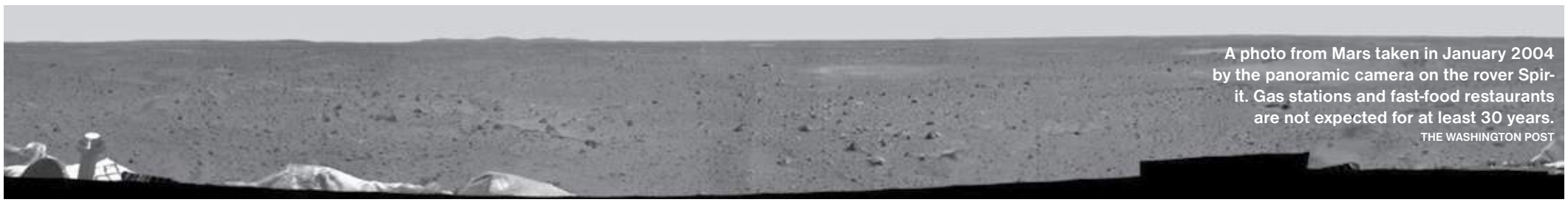
On Feb. 18, Presidents' Day, the museum will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Teachers and kids 6 and younger get in free, but there is a $6 charge for other adults, and $3 for students.

The museum is at 31 S. Greene St. (on the campus of the University of Maryland, Baltimore). For more information: www.dentalmuseum.org or 410-706-0600.

Port Discovery Children's Museum is at 35 Market Place, north of the Inner Harbor. Admission is $10.75. Find out more at www.portdiscovery.org or by calling 410-727-8120.

THE WASHINGTON POST

February is National Children's Dental Health Month. The Dr. Samuel D. Harris National Museum of Dentistry in Baltimore has on display one of George Washington's dentures. It was carved from hippo ivory.



A photo from Mars taken in January 2004 by the panoramic camera on the rover Spirit. Gas stations and fast-food restaurants are not expected for at least 30 years.
THE WASHINGTON POST

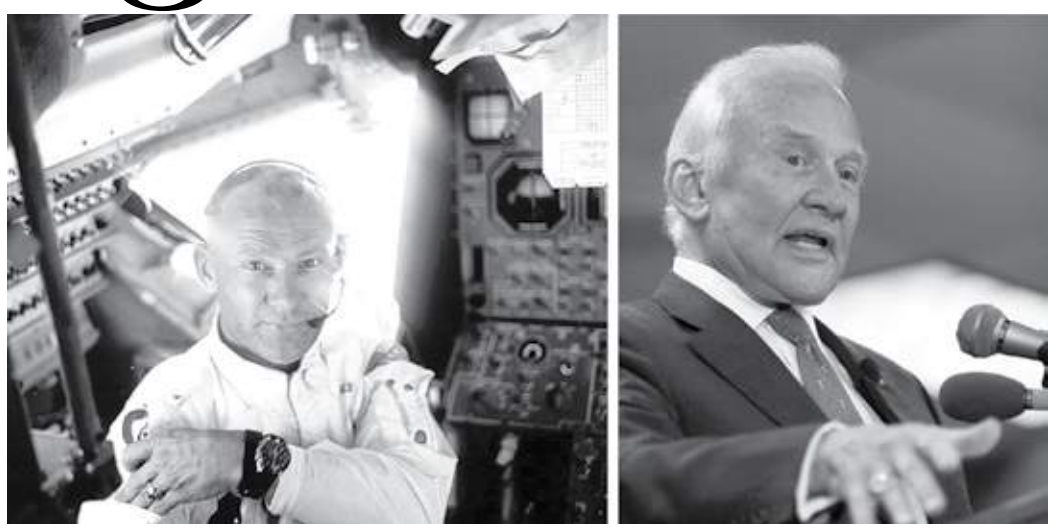
Shooting for the moon, and beyond

By BRENNA MALONEY
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—The United States launched its first satellite on Jan. 31, 1958, entering the space age by racing the Soviet Union to get to the moon. Fifty years later, our lasting presence in space could well depend on the moon.

Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin, an Apollo 11 astronaut who in 1969 became the second man to walk on the moon, described his vision for America's future in space to KidsPost's Brenna Maloney. It is a bold plan that begins with building a moon base and eventually having a human settlement on Mars.

But first, the moon ...



THE WASHINGTON POST

Left, astronaut Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin reached the moon aboard Apollo 11 in 1969. Aldrin (shown at right in 2005) described his vision for America's future in space in a KidsPost interview.

Why would we go there again?

Not for "an increase in science and knowledge about the surface of the moon," Aldrin admits. And not because of "a growing awareness of potential life support (for) Mars." Instead, he and some other scientists think a good reason to return to the moon—one that would interest others—is to tap a new energy source.

By the year 2050, Earth will have about 10 billion people, according to some estimates. The population will need five times as much power as what is now available.

The moon receives a lot of energy from the sun. Building a station there to harness that solar power and beam it to Earth would create a new non-polluting energy source, scientists say. That energy could be sold to make money for space exploration.

Sending people to Mars will take more than money. Natural resources also are necessary, but they don't all have to come from Earth, Aldrin says.

"We do expect that we will find water on the moon that can be converted into oxygen and hydrogen," he says. Oxygen and hydrogen are key elements in making rocket fuel. Having a source of fuel on the moon "is very significant to support future operations in space," Aldrin says.

So, with that solar power heading to Earth and making money to build spacecraft, and with a lunar "gas station" in place, we're ready to go.

Why Mars?

Scientists have been eyeing the Red Planet for a long time. "To our knowledge, there isn't anything that comes even close to the attractive habitation that Mars has," Aldrin says.

But landing astronauts there is still perhaps 30 years away.

How would people get there?

Aldrin imagines a reusable spacecraft that would go back and forth like a subway train between two stops. The trip to Mars would take about five months. Getting back would take longer, about eight months, in part because the planets move at different speeds around the sun.

Anyone who signs up to go to Mars should expect to spend at least three years away from Earth, Aldrin says.

In fact, he thinks that people will want to spend long stretches on Mars. "It's not the way people think right now, but certainly there are people who would be willing to change their careers working here on Earth to working on Mars."

Is Aldrin ready to sign up?

"Is it advisable at my age?" the 78-year-old asked, laughing.

MARS FACTS

By BRENNA MALONEY
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

- A Martian day is about 24 hours 39 minutes. A Martian year is about 668.5 sols (687 Earth days).
- Mars has two small moons, Phobos and Delmos. The names are Greek for "fear" and "panic."
- The atmosphere on Mars is thin and consists mostly of carbon dioxide, so it is not breathable.
- Like Earth, Mars has four seasons. During spring and summer in the southern hemisphere, large dust storm cover much of the planet.
- On the warmest days, Mars' temperature can reach 68 degrees Fahrenheit. But watch out for winter nights on Mars, when it can be -220 degrees. (Mars' average temperature is -81 degrees.)

1st Year Death Anniversary

We, the children of

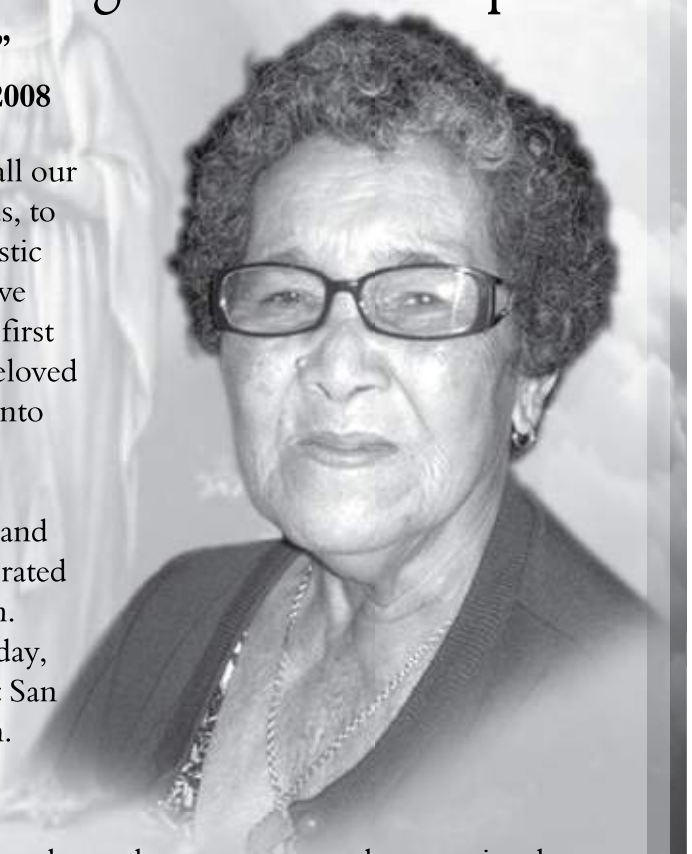
†Rosalia Tydingco Salas Concepcion

"Liang Max"

February 03-11, 2008

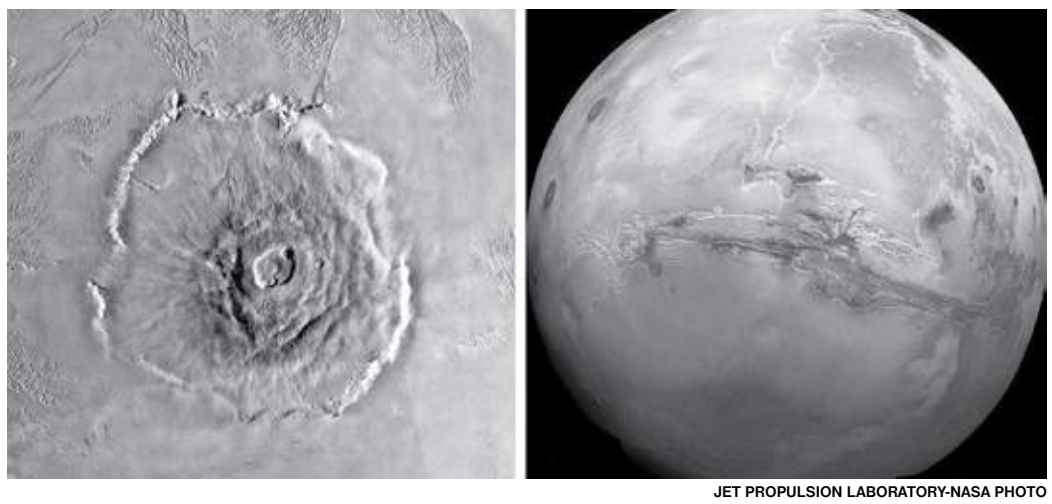
would like to invite all our relatives and friends, to join us in Eucharistic Celebrations as we commemorate the first anniversary of our beloved mother's passing into eternal life.

Mass of Intention and Rosary will be celebrated daily at 6:00 p.m. beginning on Sunday, February 3, 2008 at San Vicente Church.



Your presence, thoughts and prayers are greatly appreciated.

The Family



JET PROPULSION LABORATORY-NASA PHOTO

Olympus Mons on Mars (left) is one of the largest volcanoes in the solar system. As seen from above by the Viking 1 orbiter in 1978, the volcano is three times as high as Mount Everest. Valles Marineris (right) is a system of canyons that extends about 2,500 miles and covers about one-fifth the circumference of Mars.

What we know about Mars

By BRENNA MALONEY
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

Mars is the fourth planet from the sun. The Romans named it after their god of war. The rocks and soil on Mars have lots of iron, which has rusted and turned everything red. Even the sky looks pinkish from rusty dust that gets kicked up. That is why Mars is often called the Red Planet.

Mars has permanent ice caps at both poles. They are made of water ice and solid carbon dioxide, or dry ice. The carbon dioxide forms a snow cover in winter that melts in the spring.

Olympus Mons is one of the largest volcanoes in the solar system. As seen from above by the Viking 1 orbiter in 1978, the volcano covers an area about the size of Arizona. It is three times as high as Mount Everest, Earth's highest mountain above sea level.

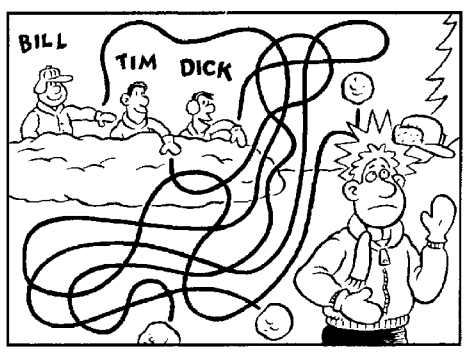
Valles Marineris is a system of canyons that extends about 2,500 miles and covers about one-fifth the circumference of Mars. Some parts of the canyon run as deep as 4 miles and as wide as 125 miles. (The Grand Canyon on Earth is 277 miles long, 18 miles wide and 1 mile deep.)

Studying the Red Planet

By BRENNA MALONEY
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

Space vehicles that have been launched to explore or photograph Mars:

1965: Mariner 4, returned 21 pictures
1976: Viking 1, first successful landing on Mars
1997: Mars Pathfinder, deployed rover Sojourner
2004: Rover Spirit, studied rocks, looked for water

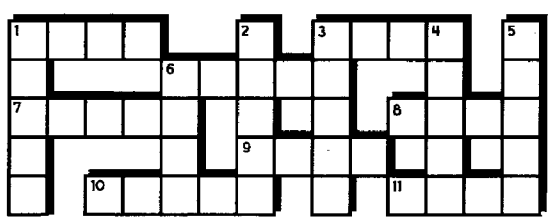


THE MAD HATTER! See if you can guess which lad knocked Mr. Martin's hat off. You only get one toss on this one.

Answer: Bill is the one with the perfect aim.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend



LET'S GO SHOPPING! Below are items from our shopping list that you will need to complete the puzzle grid above. Use the trial-and-error method to solve. Start filling the cart with these items:

4-letter words:	5-letter words:
BEEF	BEANS
COLA	CAPON
CRAB	DATES
SALT	FLOUR
TOFU	MINTS
TUNA	PIZZA
	SPICE
	SQUAB

Answers: (Across) 1. Cola 3. Beef 6. Spice. 7. Pizza 8. Tofu 9. Tuna 10. Dates 11. Crab. (Down) 1. Capon 2. Mints 3. Beans 4. Flour. 5. Squab 6. Salt.

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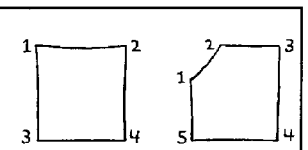
AN INTERESTING WAGER! Bet your friends that you can take one from four and have five left. When they give up, take a sheet of paper and tear off one corner. Then, instead of four corners, you now have five corners ... proving that 1 from 4 can leave you with 5.



LINK-UPS! Here's a list of 12 one-syllable words that are divided into two columns. Turn them into six longer words by linking them together. To do this, draw a line from a word in the left column to a word in the right.

1.	IMP	OWED
2.	OILS	LED
3.	MAR	AIRS
4.	HAND	HER
5.	END	TINS
6.	PANT	KIN

Answers: Impairs, oilskin, martins, handled, endowed, panther.

New Year, New Dog part IV

Finally, we come to the last and most important of the basic commands: "come." Every owner wants to be able to call their dog and have it respond, and sees this as the first priority in training.

Yet while it is a priority, it's important for your dog to be able to respond to other basic commands first, to keep it under control while learning this one. Then, the goal of "come" is for the dog to come to you from a distance and sit in front of you. To get it to this level, add the command to your training regimen once the other four commands—heel, sit, down and stay—have been learned.

Begin walking the dog, giving the command "heel." After a few paces, take a step backward, call your dog's name and give the command "come"—as in, "Fido, come!" and simultaneously snap the leash so that the dog is tugged around to his right, facing back toward you.

Continue walking backward, repeating the command. When he comes to you, stop and give the command "sit."

Some owners will tempt their dogs forward with food treats. This is fine in the initial stages, as you want to teach it that obeying the command brings good things. Or, you might limit food rewards and use lots of praise instead.

In any case, keep the training positive, always reward responses to your commands, and don't get frustrated.

Learning these basic commands is critical to your dog's, and your family's, well-being, and as such, they should be taught regularly and reinforced daily. Every family member should work with the dog to learn how to give commands properly, when to reward a dog, and when not to.

Recommended book: Breaking Bad Habits in Dogs, by Colin Tennant (Barron's Educational Series)

■ ■ ■

Send your tips, questions and comments to Paws Corner, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or e-mail them to pawscorner@hotmail.com.

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Strange BUT TRUE

By SAMANTHA WEAVER

■ In the 19th century, American author and transcendentalist philosopher Henry David Thoreau made the following sage observation: "Thank God men cannot as yet fly and lay waste the sky as well as the earth!"

■ Civil War historians say that during the war between the states, 10 percent to 20 percent of the soldiers were under the legal enlistment age of 18. In the Union Army alone, there were 800 15-year-olds, 320 14-year-olds and 127 13-year-olds.

■ You might be surprised—as I was—to learn that an early version of the automatic dishwasher was available in 1889.

■ Unless you're from the area, you've probably never heard of Laurel, Miss. If you are from the area, though, you may have heard of the small town, if for no other reason than the fact that Laurel is the home of the national anvil-shooting contest. In this annual event, no guns are used—although gunpowder plays a large role in the festivities. Here's how it works: two pounds of gunpowder is placed in a hollow space in the bottom of a 100-pound antique steel anvil. Another antique anvil of the same size and makeup is placed on top of the first anvil, and then the gunpowder is lit. The person who lit the gunpowder then runs flat-out to get out of the 300-foot danger zone, and spectators watch to see how high the second anvil goes.

■ From 1969 to 1976, dunking a basketball was against the rules of the game.

■ The formula for Coca-Cola is ultra-top-secret. Insiders say that within the company, it's referred to only as 7X.

■ ■ ■

Thought for the Day: "There is only one good substitute for the endearments of a sister, and that is the endearments of some other fellow's sister." —Josh Billings

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MAGIC MAZE ● POINTED WORDS

K	O	L	L	J	F	R	H	E	C	A	X	V	T	R
P	G	N	E	L	E	L	J	H	Y	T	F	T	D	T
T	U	T	B	T	Y	X	A	T	S	N	V	N	N	E
T	N	R	N	P	N	P	N	S	O	I	M	I	T	N
K	P	I	I	I	P	I	E	G	H	O	O	O	N	D
E	O	D	O	O	O	L	O	B	Z	P	X	P	I	P
P	I	W	I	P	T	P	U	P	Y	K	O	D	O	O
T	N	N	L	N	E	R	W	A	W	C	Q	I	P	I
O	T	L	I	N	L	U	W	E	J	E	I	M	N	N
G	A	O	F	D	C	A	L	Y	D	H	I	X	I	T
B	P	W	V	T	S	R	P	B	O	C	N	V	P	L

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

Appoint	Dew point	Midpoint	Pointy
Ballpoint	Endpoint	Pinpoint	Viewpoint
Bluepoint	Flashpoint	Pointel	Waypoint
Checkpoint	Gunpoint	Pointless	

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GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

DIFFICULTY: ★★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
★★★ GO FIGURE!

	x		+		13
+		÷		+	
	+		÷		2
x		+		+	
	x		–		26
32		11		15	

1 3 4 4 5 6 7 8 9

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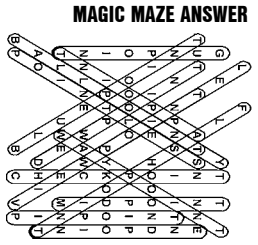
MAGIC MAZE ANSWER



GO FIGURE ANSWER

13	+	4	+	9	x	1
+		÷		+		+
2	5	÷	3	+	7
	+		+		x
26	6	–	8	x	4
	15		11		32

Pop-out heart Valentine box

Kids and adults love to receive something special from someone special on Valentine's Day. And when there's a surprise inside, so much the better! When you open the lid of this small and shiny box, a springy heart pops out at you to grab your attention and let you know that someone cares.

Here's how to make a pop-out heart valentine box:

Cut out a red heart shape from construction paper slightly smaller than the inside of a small box with a fold down lid. I used an empty toothpick box and painted it gold. Cut a smaller heart out of white construction paper. Print a love message, such as "Be Mine," on the white heart. Or you might want to play on words and write a lighthearted greeting. For example, "You put a spring in my step" or "My heart flutters for you!" Glue the white heart with the message on top of the red heart.

Wind a red pipe cleaner around your child's finger to form a spiral. Remove. An adult may use a glue gun to glue one end of the spiral to the inside center of the box and then glue the backside of the heart to the opposite end of the spiral. Let the glue set. Gently press down on the heart until it fits snugly in the box, and carefully replace the lid. Attach a ribbon to the top and one to the bottom of the opening of the box. Tie them together to keep the lid tightly in place.

If you don't have a toothpick-style box, a small jewelry box also works well. Once you have glued the springy heart inside, cover the box with a lid and tie a ribbon around the entire box to keep it closed.

For extra fun, decorate the outside of your box using your imagination. You might want to add stickers, charms and lace or announce your sentiments with conversation-heart candies glued on top.

■ ■ ■

Donna Erickson's award-winning television series "Donna's Day" airs on public television nationwide. Visit www.donnasday.com to find out when it airs on your local PBS station and to sign up for Donna's e-newsletter.

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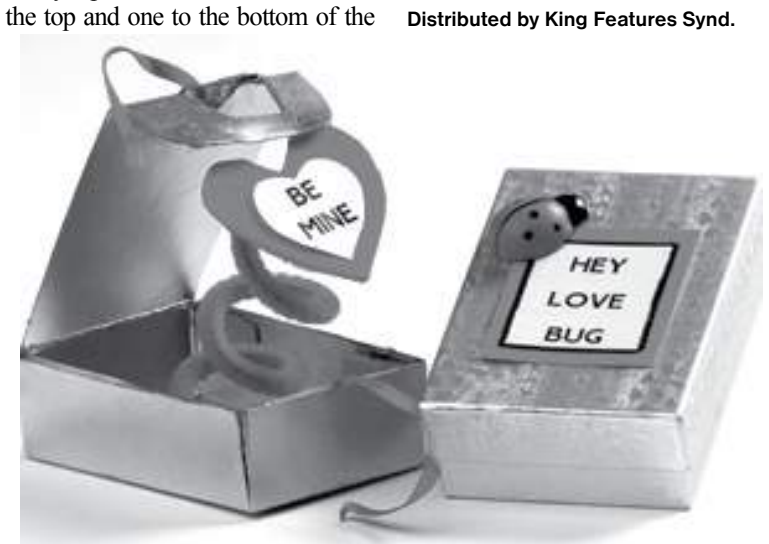


Life & Style

Mom says hospitalized Spears is doing OK

LOS ANGELES (AP)—With Britney Spears whisked out of the public spotlight Thursday and committed to a hospital psychiatric ward, it's now up to a team of professional caregivers to reverse her seemingly endless downward spiral.

Spears, accompanied by more than a dozen police officers, was taken to the UCLA Medical Center before dawn Thursday in what one officer would only say was an effort to "get help" for the troubled pop star.

It was her second 72-hour commitment in four weeks, though her previous stay lasted less than two days and was followed by more strange episodes that have accompanied her divorce and bruising child custody battle.

The law allows a person to be placed on an involuntary psychiatric hold for up to 72 hours if they are believed to be a danger to themselves or others. Spears' mother, Lynne Spears, was seen leaving the medical center's psychiatric hospital about 5:30 a.m. Asked if her daughter was all right, she replied, "Yeah."

AP

In this image from APTN video, Lynne Spears, center, Britney Spears' mother is shown leaving UCLA Medical Center with two unidentified people, early Thursday, Jan. 31, 2008, in Los Angeles.

Under the law, doctors may keep an individual under round-the-clock observation but may not medicate the person without his or her permission unless there appears to be grave danger, said Dr. Bruce Spring, assistant professor of clinical psychiatry at the University of Southern California.

"The hold is not a carte blanche for treatment," said Spring, who is not connected to Spears' case.

Spears' public emotional spiral began in November 2006 when she filed for divorce from Kevin Federline, the father of her infant sons, 1-year-old Jayden James and 2-year-old Sean Preston.

Neither Spears' attorney nor Federline's lawyer immediately returned calls for comment on her hospitalization. The pop star's spokeswoman declined to comment.

It was not immediately clear who initiated Spears' commitment process. The latest effort to get her help comes as various people in her life appear to be jockeying for influence, from her immediate family to two men who have recently surfaced.

One, Sam Lutfi, has described himself as Spears' manager and "very good friend." Earlier this week, Barbara Walters said on ABC's "The View" that Lutfi had contacted the veteran newswoman and told her that Spears saw a psychiatrist and "is starting some kind of treatment."

McCartney: I didn't have angioplasty

NEW YORK (AP)—Paul McCartney says recent media reports that he had a heart procedure last year are "entirely untrue."

"People are ringing and texting me saying, `Are you OK?'" he writes in a posting on his newly redesigned Web site. "I hadn't seen the report so I was puzzled by so many enquiries about my health. So I think it's a good time to put this rumour to rest."

The 65-year-old ex-Beatle says that during a routine medical examination over a year ago, "there was a minor irregularity which I needed to have tests for and which I have now been assured is completely fine."

Recent media reports "completely distorted the story, calling it an angioplasty, which is entirely untrue, and this is why so many friends have been concerned about my health," he writes.

Angioplasty is a procedure to check and clear clogged arteries in the heart.

"I am happy to say that I feel great and I have passed my most recent medical with flying colours."

McCartney, who is nominated for a Grammy Award for his latest album, "Memory Almost Full," says he wants to assure friends and family that he's in good health.

He adds: "I have secretly been enjoying all the sympathy I've been getting!"

Hollywood defends Ledger in video quash

NEW YORK (AP)—It was a striking example of Hollywood protecting its own: After an aggressive lobby from powerful film industry figures, "Entertainment Tonight" decided against airing a video that shows the late Heath Ledger hanging out at a party where drugs were being taken.

The show said it pulled the story "out of respect for Heath Ledger's family." But don't discount the effect of a lightning-fast campaign launched by a public relations firm that represents many of the stars "Entertainment Tonight" depends upon for stories.

Even some celebrities themselves—Natalie Portman and Sarah Jessica Parker, to name a couple—called to urge "ET" to pull the plug.

Ledger, 28, died in his Manhattan apartment Jan. 22. Authorities suspect a possible drug overdose, but the cause of his death is still pending the outcome of toxicology tests. Police said several prescription drugs—but nothing illegal—were found in the Manhattan apartment where the "Brokeback Mountain" actor's body was found.

"Entertainment Tonight" is hardly the lone news organization to broach the topic of potential drug abuse by the star. But the video it acquired, reportedly taken two years ago at a party at the Chateau Marmont Hotel, drew the fiercest attention.

The syndicated magazine's sister show, "The Insider," aired a "preview" of the story that it had planned to run Thursday that actually showed several segments of the video. Following the protest, "The Insider" yanked the segment from the West Coast version of its telecast.

AP

A memorial to actor Heath Ledger, who passed away recently, is presented at the 14th Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards on Sunday, Jan. 27, 2008, in Los Angeles.

Ledger is seen standing in the doorway of a room where the party was taking place, swigging from a beer bottle. The actor is heard saying that he was "going to get serious (word bleeped) from my girlfriend" for being at the party.

The show made clear that there was nothing on the video showing Ledger taking any drug. At one point, however, the then-26-year-old said he "used to smoke five joints a day."

But a person who has seen the entire video, who asked not to be identified because of its sensitive nature, said Ledger then points to his tattoo of "M" (for his daughter, Matilda Rose) and says, "this is to remind me never to smoke weed again." That part of the quote was not used in Wednesday's preview.

Later, with Ledger in the background, an unidentified man, his face blurred, seems to snort cocaine from a table.

After seeing a promotion for the show Wednesday, a publicist at ID, Ledger's public relations firm, called "Entertainment Tonight" and asked that the segment be pulled. The request was refused.

ID then composed a three-paragraph protest letter that it distributed to some 30 other public relations firms around Hollywood, asking them to tell their clients about what was about to happen. The circle included powerhouse publicists like PMK-HBH, 42 West and BWR.

The letter said "ET" had paid a large sum of money for the video to stir up an exploitive story about Ledger.

"For the sake of his grieving family and friends, his child and common decency, we hope to pressure `Entertainment Tonight' and `The Insider' to do the right thing and pull the spot," the letter said. "This is not journalism, it is sensationalism. It is a shameful exploitation of the lowest kind, to a talented and gentle soul, undeserving of such treatment."

Young love is too much too soon for son's parents

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: Our youngest son, "Devin," is 15. He has been seeing a girl I'll call "Allison" for five months. Allison's parents allow them to hang out at their house with parental supervision. Devin has come home twice with hickeys, and once with permanent marker on his chest and abdomen saying "Allison's boob" and "Allison's property."

I have spoken to Allison's father more than once about their extreme intimacy at this age. (She's 14.) He assures me that they are supervised.

I feel my son is too young for this relationship, but I am unsure that forcing it to end would be the best option. We invite Allison over as often as our work schedules allow. They are allowed to listen to music in his room, but the door is always open, and we're "hovering" most of the time. We also engage in family games with her and our son.

How can we get this relationship out of the bedroom and into the light?

—FURIOUS IN VENTURA, CALIF.

DEAR FURIOUS: You have described two healthy, normal young people with too much time on their hands and one set of parents with their heads in the sand.

The time has come to involve your son in after-school sports, an extracurricular class or a part-time job. Any of these will allow Devin less time in Allison's bedroom.

If that's not feasible, then I urge you to ensure that your son is fully informed about birth control and sexually transmitted diseases and has access to condoms. The same goes for Allison. Better to be safe than sorry.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: A few years ago, I was pregnant with my son. When I was eight months along, my cousin gave me a baby walker that I had listed on my registry. She then left on a trip out of the country.

A week later, my baby boy was stillborn. I was devastated. When my cousin returned from her trip, she actually asked me to return her gift. She said that since the baby was dead, she didn't think I "needed it" anymore.

Perhaps that was true, but I was outraged at her actions. Do I have any right to be so mad?

—MOURNING IN OHIO

DEAR MOURNING: Your cousin's request was outrageously insensitive, and her timing was awful. Under the circumstances, your reaction was natural and justified. Please accept my deepest sympathy for your loss.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Although I have lived in Denver for a number of years, I still have a very thick, very Southern accent. I am often asked, "Where did you come from?" My answer is usually, "From my mother!"

Am I overly sensitive, or are people being rude? If you have a more appropriate answer, please share it with me.

—DRAWLING IN DENVER

DEAR DRAWLING: When people hear an accent—regional or foreign—they are inclined to be curious. Although it is technically rude to ask a stranger a personal question about his or her background, I don't think it's meant to be insulting. Because you don't care to elaborate on your background, your answer is fine.

■ ■ ■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

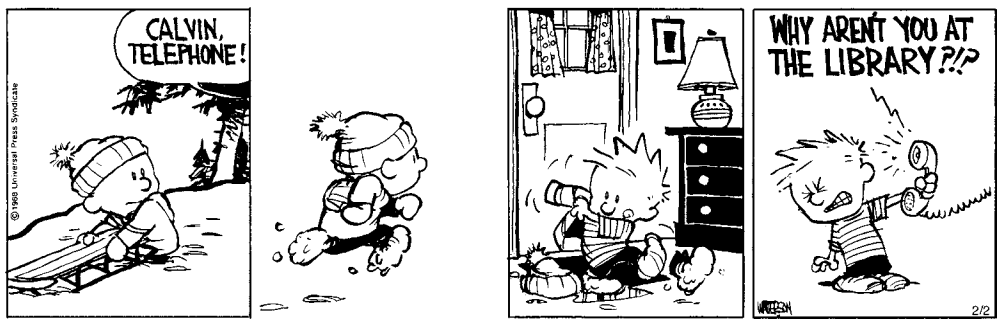
■ ■ ■

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis

I COULD TELL YOU A THING OR TWO ABOUT WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU
OR THREE, OR FOUR, OR FIVE, OR SIX, OR SEVEN, OR EIGHT...
...OR NINE, OR TEN, OR...
JUST GET ON WITH IT, OKAY?!
JIM DAVIS 2-2

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

No longer using that exercise ball for exercise? Then play the game that could possibly one day sweep the country -- Exercise Ball Movie Charades!
"GREAT BALLS OF FIRE"
"KINGPIN"
"THE BIG LEBOWSKI"
* ANSWER: "THE BIG LEBOWSKI"

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

ONLY 24 MORE HOURS OF SUPERBOWL PREGAME COVERAGE.
QUIET! I CAN'T HEAR THIS INTERVIEW WITH THE THIRD-STRING WATER BOY.
2008 © Glenn McCoy/Dist. by Universal Press Syndicate

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Use the grill
6 Hemingway's yacht
11 Oodles
12 Garland
14 Boutonnieres' locales
15 Merry
16 Roadie's burden
17 Ship spotter
19 Feathery accessory
20 Puzzle's center?
22 Felon's flight
23 Dweeb
24 Affix
26 Kin of "aloha" or "ciao"
28 Started
30 Weep
31 Used the CB
35 Old man
39 "Metamorphoses" poet
40 Seek damages
42 Nitwit
43 Lots of voltage (Abbr.)
44 Sty cries
46 Pen point
47 Figures of speech
49 Cut aid
51 Lite
52 Octogenarian's next milestone
53 Approaches
54 Tumbler

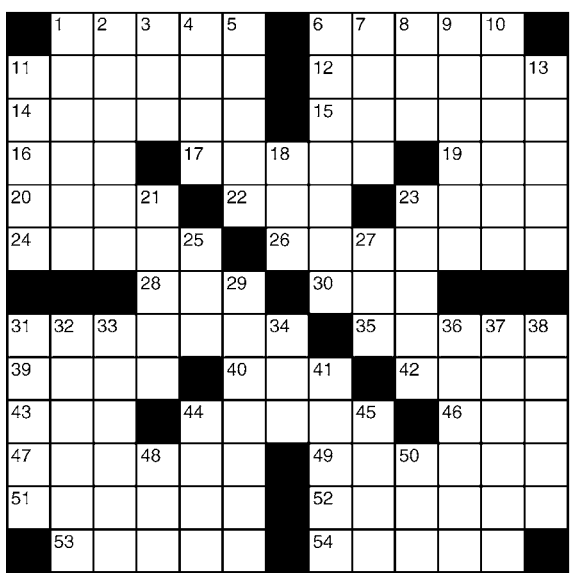
DOWN

1 Pointed a finger at
2 Served as an agent for
3 Indivisible
4 "— have to do"
5 Disinfectant brand
6 Nightwear
7 Party to
8 Fond du —
9 Pueblo materials
10 Vacation spot
11 Shopping center
13 "Morning Express" anchor
18 Took charge of
21 Firm
23 Business bigwig
25 Keanu's "Matrix" role
27 Floor cleaner
29 Ceases
31 First name of 13-Down
32 Photographer Richard
33 Infer
34 Bradstreet partner
36 Shetlands et al.
37 Score units
38 Westminster, for one
41 — out (supplementing)
44 The Tentmaker
45 Earth
48 "Birds — feather ..."
50 "CSI" evidence

Solution time: 27 mins.

N	O	H	O	W	■	M	O	P	■	S	A	L
O	P	E	R	A	■	A	M	I	■	C	I	A
S	T	Y	E	S	■	D	A	G	W	O	O	D
■	■	W	O	N	D	E	R	■	H	U	L	L
U	F	O	■	T	E	D	■	A	E	R	I	E
L	O	O	P	■	N	O	B	L	E	■	■	■
M	E	D	I	C	I	■	O	I	L	E	R	S
■	■	■	L	E	M	O	N	■	S	L	U	E
S	C	U	L	L	■	N	U	S	■	M	E	W
A	L	S	O	■	B	E	S	T	O	W	■	■
L	E	A	W	O	O	D	■	A	B	O	U	T
S	A	G	■	F	I	G	■	M	O	O	S	E
A	T	E	■	A	L	E	■	P	E	D	A	L

Yesterday's answer 2-2



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Shakira, 31; Christie Brinkley, 54; Brent Spiner, 59; Farrah Fawcett, 61

Happy Birthday: You must look at other possibilities, especially with work and money. If you feel you are in a standstill position, readjust your game plan. Time spent nurturing a partnership will pay off. Emotions will run high this year, especially where friends and children are concerned. Maintain your position and give everyone you encounter a run for his or her money. Your numbers are 10, 13, 21, 24, 42, 49

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): You can't sit around waiting for others to get things started. Take charge of your life and force issues so you can get ahead. Hone your skills or implement something you do well into a job that fits your abilities. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Don't look for others to do things for you. Everything you achieve or receive today will be by your own doing. Believe in what you have to offer and do not sell yourself short. You can make some hefty gains if you stick to your plans. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Go after a professional position. Concentrate on what counts. You have to draw the line, learn to say no and prepare for your own success instead of helping everyone else become successful. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You may feel drawn to someone and, if so, go the distance and make this connection mean something. You can let down your guard and talk about the way you feel, knowing you will get good results. Don't let fear hold you back. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Don't lead someone on or talk about your intentions if you have no plans of following through. If you are confused, back away until you know your true feelings. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): A little pampering is long overdue. Enjoy what life has to offer and let love lead to something special. Your confidence will be enhanced if you chill out, relax and enjoy your good fortune. ✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Take off on a trip, join an interest group or get involved in a hobby or physical activity. This is the perfect day to experiment with your looks or with something you've always wanted to do. This is no time to be lazy. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Don't take what others say to heart. Separate yourself from the crowd and follow what you believe is the right path for you. The more unique you are, the more interest you will get from strangers and people looking for something a little different. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Don't be alarmed if someone tries to meddle in your affairs. You've got the upper hand, so use it. Stick to the truth and call things as you see them. Be inventive and you will come up with solutions. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): You don't have to do everything on your own to prosper. Utilize what others have done already and the experience they have to offer. Love is in the stars, so put time aside for fun and games. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Consider what you can do for others and you will solidify the type of support you need to do your own thing. It's time to initiate something you do well in order to excel financially and personally. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Don't let your emotions stop you from doing what's right. Avoid stubbornness or jealousy. Get serious about who you are, what you want and where you see yourself heading in the future. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are aggressive, confident, creative and inventive. You are quick to assess situations and react. You are curious, playful and willing to take on whatever comes your way.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	6						8	
8			1		5			3
		1		9		6		
	1						6	
		5		2		7		
	8						5	
		8		1		2		
9			5		3			8
	3						4	

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 2/02

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

2	4	3	9	6	1	8	5	7
5	6	7	3	8	4	1	2	9
1	8	9	5	7	2	4	6	3
6	3	8	2	9	7	5	4	1
4	1	2	8	3	5	7	9	6
9	7	5	4	1	6	2	3	8
3	9	4	7	2	8	6	1	5
8	2	6	1	5	9	3	7	4
7	5	1	6	4	3	9	8	2

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 2/01

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

WORLD CLASS MUSEUMS **Solution: 9 letters**

N	D	E	L	K	D	A	V	I	N	C	I	C	I	E
G	A	L	L	E	R	Y	I	W	D	U	I	I	M	L
W	A	I	T	P	P	O	E	L	M	L	P	O	A	M
H	N	B	N	A	O	A	W	O	B	T	R	Y	X	E
C	O	R	L	O	L	E	N	U	E	U	O	O	C	D
T	U	A	T	T	S	A	P	V	S	R	F	N	W	I
R	C	R	H	I	L	H	R	R	A	E	E	E	O	C
E	E	Y	A	I	M	E	T	E	Y	I	S	R	S	I
A	U	F	S	T	S	E	S	I	D	T	S	U	S	E
S	Q	A	A	N	O	N	D	U	M	A	I	T	A	T
U	I	S	O	S	E	R	A	I	R	S	O	C	C	A
R	T	C	R	H	O	A	U	T	A	N	N	E	I	V
E	N	I	T	F	R	E	S	T	U	D	Y	L	P	I
S	A	A	X	B	A	L	L	E	V	R	A	M	S	R
F	B	O	T	A	N	I	C	A	L	Ⓓ	Ⓔ	Ⓢ	Ⓚ	P

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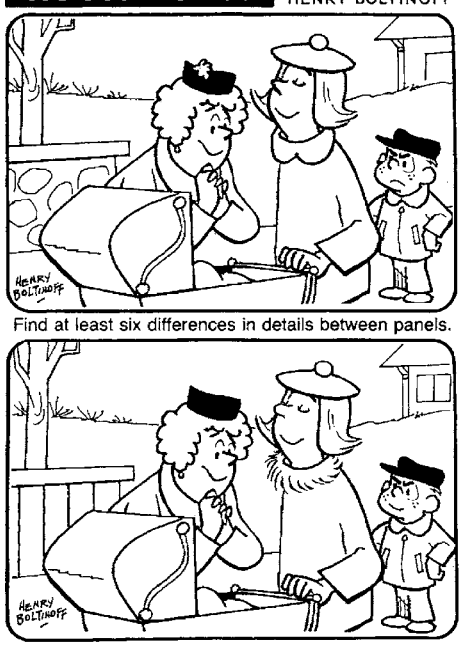
Antique, Arts, Athens, Audience, Ball, Botanical, City, Conserve, Culture, Curator, DaVinci, Desk, Fairs, Gallery, Hall, Imax, Learn, Lecture, Library, Louvre, Marvel, Media, Medici, Mona Lisa, Oxford, Palace, People, Picasso, Private, Profession, Public, Rome, Royal, Safe, Smithsonian, Study, Taste, Time, Treasures, Vienna, View, Wait, Wealthy, Work, World

Yesterday's Answer: Families

We listened to your requests! **TREASURY #6** is the first-ever Wonderword book containing only 20 x 20 puzzles, with 75 of these large puzzles. To order, send check or money order for $10.95 each plus $3.25 p&h ($14.20 total each. U.S. funds only) for the first volume. $1.50 p&h for each additional volume. to Wonderword, Universal Press Syndicate, 4520 Main St., Kansas City, Mo. 64111 or call toll-free 1-800-255-5734, ext. 6688. Order online at upuzzles.com.

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

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Differences: 1. Lady's hat is different. 2. Boy is smiling. 3. House window is different. 4. Stone wall has become a fence. 5. Mom's collar is different. 6. Mom's nose is changed.

Wishing Well®

6	2	6	2	8	2	3	6	2	8	4	3	8
T	D	A	O	N	U	F	K	B	E	A	R	W
5	8	2	5	6	7	5	2	3	8	2	3	5
B	A	T	E	E	B	C	S	I	M	A	E	H
4	6	8	6	4	2	6	4	3	4	7	4	6
P	A	I	C	P	R	T	L	N	Y	E	W	I
3	8	4	2	6	5	2	7	2	6	2	3	6
D	A	I	E	V	O	R	G	E	E	M	S	R
3	5	4	8	5	2	7	8	7	5	2	4	3
V	O	L	B	S	O	R	L	A	Y	V	L	I
7	3	7	2	3	6	8	2	8	4	7	4	8
C	S	I	E	I	O	E	D	F	P	O	O	R
3	8	7	6	8	4	8	4	7	6	8	4	8
T	I	U	L	E	W	N	E	S	E	D	R	S

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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Super Crossword STEP SAVER

ACROSS

1 Costa del —
4 Shed
9 Giant legend
12 European capital
18 Important numero
19 First name in aviation
21 Word with jacket or soup
22 January stoat
23 Start of a remark by 131 Across
25 Jurassic giant
27 Powerful beasts
28 Fancy fabric
30 Goes downhill fast?
31 Summer hrs.
32 Neighbor of Nev.
35 Barnyard butter
37 When pigs fly, to Tennyson
40 Part 2 of remark
50 Flamenco dancer's shout
51 Use a colander
52 Rage
53 Supermarket section
54 Novelist Radcliffe
55 Like some light fixtures
58 Adriatic seaport
61 Capp's "— Abner"
62 Sample the soufflé
64 Minnesota twins?
65 Gen. Robt. —
66 Skater Midori
67 Exchange
70 Camping equipment
72 A bad figure?
73 Fabric suffix
74 Mayberry aunt
76 Part 3 of remark
79 Misjudge
80 Rocky hill
81 Pianist Templeton
82 Swing around
83 Periodic table info
85 "My — True Love" ('54 song)
86 Tabula —
87 D-Day craft
88 Herbert Hoover, for one
92 Cookbook phrase
93 "Suspect" star
94 Agitated
98 Cry's partner
99 Actress Berger
101 Palindromic title
103 Lenya or Lehmann
104 — premium
105 End of remark
111 Judge
112 Copley or Hatcher
113 Room for improvement?
114 Drink like a dachshund
117 Imminent
119 "— Gay"
123 Presque —, ME
127 Simple, to Sherlock
131 Speaker of the remark
134 Acid neutralizer
135 Tell it like it isn't
136 Provokes
137 A mean Amin
138 Micawber portrayer
139 Author Wallace
140 Indian state
141 Damone or Dana

DOWN

1 Rotund wrestling?
2 Black
3 Chris of The Pet Shop Boys
4 Brit. fliers
5 Rob Roy's uncle
6 Basilica features
7 Director Kazan
8 Cheerful song
9 — -Locka, FL
10 '62 Tornadoes hit
11 It may be small
12 Tenant
13 Lyricist Gershwin
14 Dallas coll.
15 Roc or robin
16 Burden
17 Heron's home
20 Do a mechanic's job
24 Machu Picchu native
26 Sty cry
29 Eggy beverage
33 One of the Jacksons
34 Apollo's instrument
36 In the thick of
38 TV's "The Courtship of — Father"
39 Nutritional abbr.
40 Gravy vessel
41 Forearm bone
42 Itches
43 Middle of a game?
44 Hasten
45 Entomologist's concern
46 Defies a dictator
47 More obsequious
48 Susann or Steinbeck
49 Cordage material
56 Deceives
57 Actress Parsons
59 "Hi, Ho!"
60 Adjust a timer
63 Poetic monogram
68 Islamic deity
69 Bel —
71 Cubbins' creator
74 Alley cat?
75 Verdi hero
77 Amulet motif
78 Fish container?
79 WWII area
80 It may be eaten or drunk
81 Penny —
84 With prudence
89 Cry of surprise
90 Self starter?
91 Around the corner
94 "Martha the Mouth"
95 — Gatos, CA
96 Catchall abbr.
97 Forest father
100 Designer Lapidus
102 "Alice's Restaurant" star
106 Court sport
107 Leave out
108 Is for two
109 Sapporo spy
110 "Time's Arrow" author
114 Table extender
115 "— Need" ('67 song)
116 Pedigreed pooch
118 Vex
120 Geraldine Chaplin's mom
121 Mr. Diamond
122 Affirmative votes
124 Hood's weapon
125 City near Stockton
126 Really big
128 Bad beginning
129 Antiquity, in antiquity
130 Evergreen tree
132 Lingerie item
133 The end?

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Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez

1. GEOGRAPHY: Where is the Khyber Pass?
2. FOOD & DRINK: What kind of food is a nectarine?
3. MUSIC: What all-female band had a hit with the song "We Got the Beat"?
4. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What kind of animal also is known as a "gnu"?
5. HISTORY: What was the Tower Commission established to investigate in the 1980s?
6. LANGUAGE: What is meant by the term "lingua franca"?
7. ANATOMY: Where is the uvula in the human body?
8. ANCIENT WORLD: Which philosopher is credited with the maxim: "Man is the measure of all things."
9. LITERATURE: Which poet's 1928 book was titled "Good Morning, America"?
10. U.S. PRESIDENTS: Which president's face is on the $100,000 bill issued in 1929?

Answers

1. Between Afghanistan and Pakistan
2. Peach
3. The Go-Go's
4. Wildebeest
5. The Iran-Contra Affair
6. Common language
7. Back of the throat
8. Protagoras
9. Carl Sandburg
10. Woodrow Wilson's

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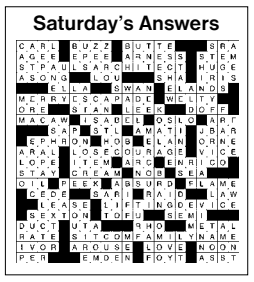
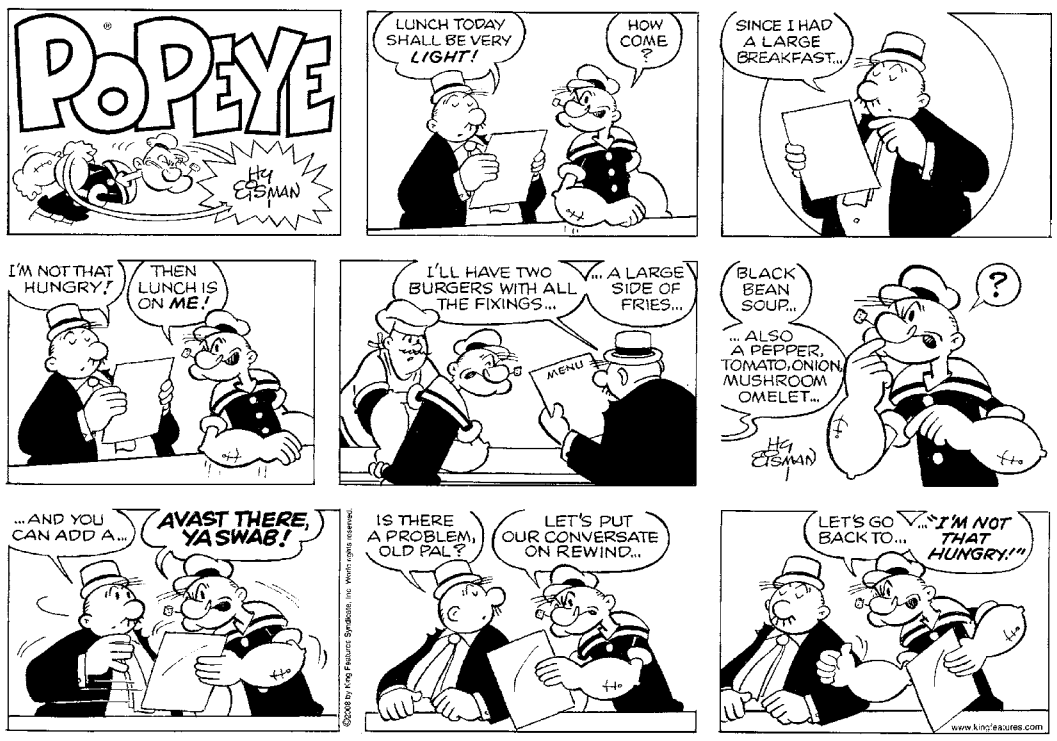
Saturday's Answers




POPEYE
HEY EISMAN
LUNCH TODAY SHALL BE VERY LIGHT!
HOW COME?
SINCE I HAD A LARGE BREAKFAST...
I'M NOT THAT HUNGRY!
THEN LUNCH IS ON ME!
I'LL HAVE TWO BURGERS WITH ALL THE FIXINGS...
...A LARGE SIDE OF FRIES...
MENU
BLACK BEAN SOUP...
...ALSO A PEPPER, TOMATO, ONION, MUSHROOM OMELET...
?
...AND YOU CAN ADD A...
AVAST THERE, YA SWAB!
IS THERE A PROBLEM, OLD PAL?
LET'S PUT OUR CONVERSATE ON REWIND...
LET'S GO BACK TO...
...I'M NOT THAT HUNGRY!'"
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Amber Waves by Dave T. Phipps

MY DAD'S BIRTHDAY IS TOMORROW AND I HAVE A BIG PROBLEM.
I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING FOR HIM.
WHY DON'T YOU JUST MAKE HIM SOMETHING?
ARE YOU KIDDING? I CAN'T GIVE MY ART AWAY. IT DEPRECIATES THE VALUE.
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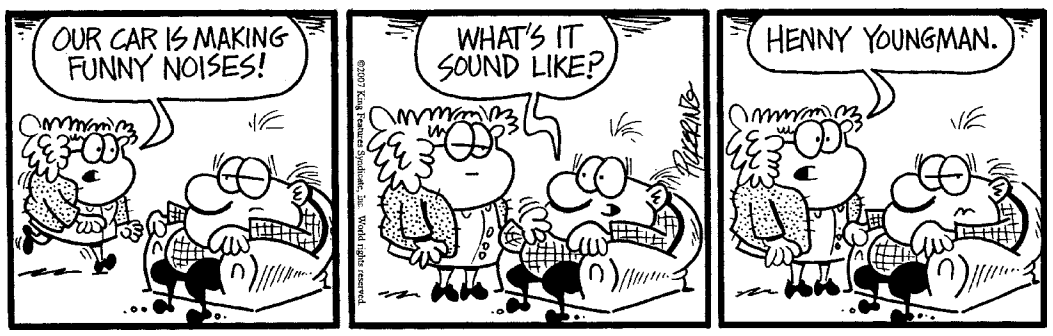
The Spats by Jeff Pickering


OUR CAR IS MAKING FUNNY NOISES!
WHAT'S IT SOUND LIKE?
HENNY YOUNGMAN.
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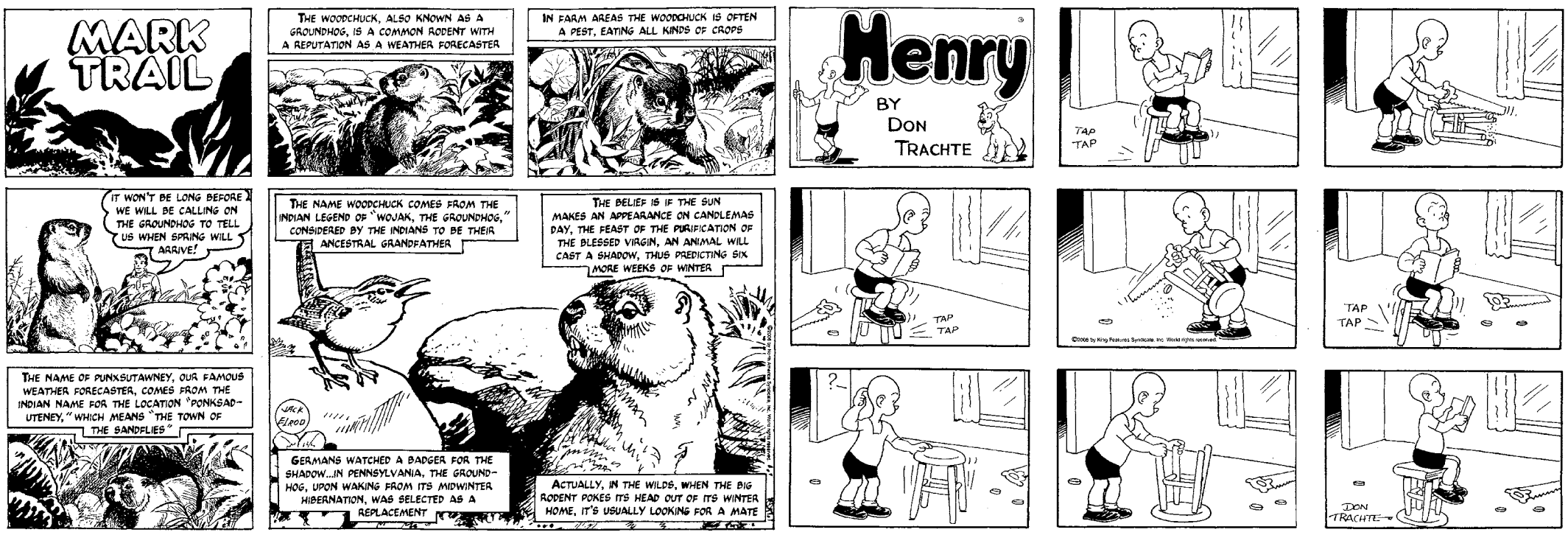
MARK TRAIL
THE WOODCHUCK, ALSO KNOWN AS A GROUNDHOG, IS A COMMON RODENT WITH A REPUTATION AS A WEATHER FORECASTER
IN FARM AREAS THE WOODCHUCK IS OFTEN A PEST, EATING ALL KINDS OF CROPS
IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE WE WILL BE CALLING ON THE GROUNDHOG TO TELL US WHEN SPRING WILL ARRIVE!
THE NAME OF PUNXSUTAWNEY, OUR FAMOUS WEATHER FORECASTER, COMES FROM THE INDIAN NAME FOR THE LOCATION "PONKSADUTENEY," WHICH MEANS "THE TOWN OF THE SANDFLIES"
THE NAME WOODCHUCK COMES FROM THE INDIAN LEGEND OF "WOJAK, THE GROUNDHOG," CONSIDERED BY THE INDIANS TO BE THEIR ANCESTRAL GRANDFATHER
THE BELIEF IS IF THE SUN MAKES AN APPEARANCE ON CANDLEMAS DAY, THE FEAST OF THE PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN, AN ANIMAL WILL CAST A SHADOW, THUS PREDICTING SIX MORE WEEKS OF WINTER
JACK ELROD
GERMANS WATCHED A BADGER FOR THE SHADOW...IN PENNSYLVANIA, THE GROUNDHOG, UPON WAKING FROM ITS MIDWINTER HIBERNATION, WAS SELECTED AS A REPLACEMENT
ACTUALLY, IN THE WILDS, WHEN THE BIG RODENT POKES ITS HEAD OUT OF ITS WINTER HOME, IT'S USUALLY LOOKING FOR A MATE
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Henry
BY DON TRACHTE
TAP TAP
DON TRACHTE

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR RENT RESIDENTIAL

Apartment For Rent (in Beach Road, Garapan) One (1) Bedroom fully furnished with back-up generator and 24 hour water, washer & dryer facilities in the building. For inquiries, pls. call 322-6183

House for lease, 53+ years. Newly renovated 2BR/1BA in Fina Sisu near NMC. Asking $115K. Contact Scott or Melinda Crockett, 234-5260 or 788-1834. Call for appointment.

Apartment room for rent: Fully furnished 1 brm, T/B, 24-hr water $210/month, near Conwood | Tel. 287-1372, 235-6748

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1 COMPUTER TEACHER KINDERGARDEN (ST 7286)
Salary:$3.05-$7.00/hour. Benefits: Workmen's compensation insurance & medical insurance. Contact: Sister Remedios ECDC dba Preschool @234-6247.

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1 GENERAL MANAGER (ST 7287)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Surety bond & workers compensation. Contact: Guang International Corp. dba Cherry Gift Shop @483-5034.

1 MANAGER ASSISTANT (ST 7288)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Surety bond & workers compensation. Contact: Guang International Corp. dba Cherry Gift Shop @483-5034.

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2 ELECTRICIAN (ST 7289)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical; surety bond & workers compensation. Contact: JXYZ Corp. dba Saipan Souvenir Manufacture @285-0004.

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1 HEAVY EUQIPMENT (MAINTENANCE) MECHANIC (ST 7290)
Salary:$4.00/hour. Benefits: Workers compensation; surety bond & medical. Contact: YS Corp. dba YS Construction @483-5822.

1 INTERPRETER (ST 7291)
Salary:$4.00/hour. Benefits: Surety bond; workers compensation & medical. Contact: YS Corp. dba YS Construction @483-5822.

1 GENERAL MANAGER (ST 7292)
Salary:$5.00/hour. Benefits: Surety bond; workers compensation & medical. Contact: YS Corp. dba YS Construction @483-5822.

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1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (ST 7293)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: D.Y. Corporation @233-1212.

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2 CERTIFIED FAA AIRCRAFT MECHANIC (ST 7294)
Salary:$2,200.00-$2,400.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical & workman's compensation provided. Contact: Pacific Airport Services @235-4000.

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1 ELECTRONIC TECHNICIAN (ST 7295)
Salary:$4.00/hour. Benefits: Medical & work compensation provided. Contact: Bobbies Café @235-2624.

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1 ACCOUNTANT (ST 7296)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Free housing; self provided food; medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: Horizons, Inc. @323-8882/85.

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1 HOUSEWORKER (ST 7297)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: $50.00/monthly deductible housing; $50.00/monthly deductible food; medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: Albert O. Tiu @323-8882/85.

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1 COST ACCOUNTANT (ST 7298)
Salary:$7.60-$8.60/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; employer provided meals; medical insurance & workers compensation. Contact: Inter Pacific Resorts Corp. dba Pacific Islands Club Saipan @234-7976.

1 ELECTRICIAN (ST 7299)
Salary:$3.55-$4.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; employer provided meals; medical insurance & workers compensation. Contact: Inter Pacific Resorts Corp. dba Pacific Islands Club Saipan @234-7976.

3 WAITRESS/WAITER (ST 7300)
Salary:$3.55-$4.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing (2) employer provided shared housing (1); employer provided meals; medical insurance & workers compensation. Contact: Inter Pacific Resorts Corp. dba Pacific Islands Club Saipan @234-7976.

3 COOK (ST 7301)
Salary:$4.10-$5.10/hour. Benefits: Employer provided shared housing (1) self provided housing (2); employer provided meals; medical insurance & workers compensation. Contact: Inter Pacific Resorts Corp. dba Pacific Islands Club Saipan @234-7976.

1 BARTENDER (ST 7302)
Salary:$3.55-$4.05/hour. Benefits: Employer provided shared housing; employer provided meals; medical insurance & workers compensation. Contact: Inter Pacific Resorts Corp. dba Pacific Islands Club Saipan @234-7976.

1 BAKER (ST 7303)
Salary:$3.55-$4.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; employer provided meals; medical insurance & workers compensation. Contact: Inter Pacific Resorts Corp. dba Pacific Islands Club Saipan @234-7976.

1 ACCOUNTANT (ST 7304)
Salary:$6.50-$7.50/hour. Benefits: Employer provided shared housing; employer provided meals; medical insurance & workers compensation. Contact: Inter Pacific Resorts Corp. dba Pacific Islands Club Saipan @234-7976.

1 ACCOUNTANT (ST 7305)
Salary:$5.00-$6.00/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; employer provided meals; medical insurance & workers compensation. Contact: Inter Pacific Resorts Corp. dba Pacific Islands Club Saipan @234-7976.

1 HOUSEKEEPING SUPERVISOR (ST 7306)
Salary:$4.00-$4.25/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; employer provided meals; medical insurance & workers compensation. Contact: Inter Pacific Resorts Corp. dba Pacific Islands Club Saipan @234-7976.

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1 SHIP FITTER (ST 7307)
Salary:$4.50/hour. Benefits: Company provided housing; self provided food; medical insurance-100% medical & dental, workers compensation. Contact: Seabridge, Inc. dba Seabridge, Inc. @322-7344.

1 WELDING TECHNICIAN (ST 7308)
Salary:$4.75/hour. Benefits: Company provided housing; self provided food; medical insurance-100% medical & dental, workers compensation. Contact: Seabridge, Inc. dba Seabridge, Inc. @322-7344.

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1 CARPENTER (ST 7309)
Salary:$5.00/hour. Benefits: Free housing if no A/C; medical insurance; vacation leave & workers compensation. Contact: Triple J Saipan, Inc. @234-1795.

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2 WAITRESS/WAITER (ST 7310)
Salary:$3.55-$4.15/hour. Benefits: $100.00/housing allowance; 2 duty meals; shared cost medical insurance; vacation leave & workers compensation. Contact: WDI Saipan, Inc. dba Tony Roma's/Capricciosa @322-7516.

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1 HOUSEWORKER (ST 7311)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & work compensation. Contact: Scot Thompson @287-6379.

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1 ACCOUNTANT (ST 7312)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: self provided housing; self provided food; free medical insurance; workers compensation insurance & as well as duty meal. Contact: RYU Corporation @287-5918.

1 (ASSISTANT) MANAGER GEN. (ST 7313)
Salary:$4.50/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; free medical insurance & workers compensation insurance. Contact: RYU Corporation @287-5918.

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1 KITCHEN HELPER (ST 7314)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; meals (no charge); medical & workmen's compensation coverage & own transportation. Contact: Rong Hua Corporation @233-4825.

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1 HOUSEWORKER (ST 7315)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; free food & medical. Contact: Celina D. Taylor @235-0916.

WHATZIT Solution:
Turn the other cheek

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2 WAREHOUSE MAN (ST 7316)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical insurance & workers compensation. Contact: Saipan Dolphin Corporation dba Dolphin Wholesale/Mart @235-5429.

2 CASHIER (ST 7317)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; medical insurance & workers compensation. Contact: Saipan Dolphin Corporation dba Dolphin Wholesale/Mart @235-5429.

1 GEN. MAINT. WORKER (ST 7318)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; medical insurance & workers compensation. Contact: Saipan Dolphin Corporation dba Dolphin Wholesale/Mart @235-5429.

1 COMPUTER PROGRAMMER (ST 7319)
Salary:$4.50/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; medical insurance & workers compensation. Contact: Saipan Dolphin Corporation dba Dolphin Wholesale/Mart @235-5429.

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1 MAINTENANCE REPAIRER INDUSTRIAL (ST 7320)
Salary:$3.55-$7.50/hour. Benefits: Company provided housing; self provided food; health insurance & workmen's compensation. Contact: Pacific Rainbow (CNMI), Inc. dba Rainbow & Sherwin Williams Paint @234-1717/235-7233.

NEW Rattan Furniture
FOR SALE
Expensive material
Call 235-4791,
433-9616, 285-7446

$200 REWARD FOR LOST WALLET

Brown wallet lost within the vicinity of Tony Roma's, Garapan on January 25, 2008 around 5 a.m. Important documents like entry permit (#156077) and drivers license (#12222003) needed to be returned to owner. Reward of $200 will be given. No questions asked.

If found or any information, please call 285-4469.

WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

CHEEK CHEEK

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Find today's solution in this section

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$25
• 5-Liner	$35
• 3-Liner with picture	$45
• 5-Liner with picture	$55

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

As added service to our valued customers, you may now submit all your JVA placements for announcement/publication in *Saipan Tribune's* print and online edition and KZMI/KCNM at the same time. No more worries of having to go to two different locations every time you need to place job vacancy announcements. Special rates are available for JVA customers under this arrangement.

Print*	
• 1st position	$10
• 2nd position	$3
• Succeeding positions	$1
Combo (Print and Online)*	
• 1st position	$13
• 2nd position	$4
• Succeeding positions	$2
Radio (KCNM/KZMI)	
• Up to 6 positions	$5
• More than 6 positions	$10

LOWER RATES! Effective Feb. 3, 2007

*These rates apply to all vacancy announcements that include corresponding benefits and which announcements are all under the same company name.

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Job Vacancy Announcements

Monday Through Friday Issues: All ads placed before 12 noon will come out the next publication date.

Saturday And Sunday Issues:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on either Sunday or Monday issues.
- KCNM/KZMI: All ads placed on Friday (9am to 5pm) will be for Monday's radio announcement.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

Job Vacancy Announcements

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

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6 CUTTER (ST 7349)
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Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen compensation. Contact: Kyunseung (Saipan), Inc. @322-5795.

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Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen compensation. Contact: Kyunseung (Saipan), Inc. @322-5795.

3 MAINTENANCE REPAIRER (ST 7353)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen compensation. Contact: Kyunseung (Saipan), Inc. @322-5795.

50 SEWING MACHINE OPERATOR (ST 7354)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen compensation. Contact: Kyunseung (Saipan), Inc. @322-5795.

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235-NEWS

Paul, West give Hornets 2 All-Stars

NEW YORK (AP)—Chris Paul and David West were picked for their first All-Star game Thursday night, giving the hometown New Orleans Hornets a pair of players for the event.

Detroit, Phoenix and Washington also had multiple players chosen as reserves for the Feb. 17 game. Boston will only send two of its Big Three to the Big Easy. Paul Pierce was voted in by Eastern Conference head coaches to join starter Kevin Garnett, but Ray Allen fell short.

"That's crazy," Pierce said. "I think Ray should have been on there based on our record and what we're doing team-wise."

The Pistons' Chauncey Billups and Richard Hamilton are headed back for the third straight year, while the Suns will be represented by Steve Nash and Amare Stoudemire. Caron Butler and Antawn Jamison also were recognized for their strong play, which has kept the Wizards in the middle of the playoff race despite the absence of injured guard Gilbert Arenas.

"To find a way to turn things around and play at a very high level and be very competitive in our conference," Jamison said, "it speaks volumes for the type of year Caron and myself are having."

Toronto's Chris Bosh and Atlanta guard Joe Johnson were the other players picked for the East, which will be coached by Boston's Doc Rivers. Dallas forward Dirk Nowitzki, the reigning NBA MVP, Utah's Carlos Boozer and Portland guard Brandon Roy were selected from the West.

Paul, Nash and Roy emerged from a crowded group of West guards to beat out the likes of Golden State's Baron Davis, Utah point guard Deron Williams, and Tony Parker and Manu Ginobili from the defending champion San Antonio Spurs.

"I'm very proud," Nash said. "It's always a great honor, especially this year with so many guards in the Western Conference. It's nice to be a part of that group."

Also missing out during the worst season of his career was Shaquille O'Neal, ending his streak of 14 consecutive All-Star selections. That tied the record held by Jerry West and Karl Malone.

Paul, the 2006 Rookie of the Year, and West have helped the Hornets to a 32-13 record, which leads the Southwest Division. New Orleans earned another representative later Thursday, as Byron Scott secured the West coaching nod after Dallas' loss at Boston.

Paul is averaging 20.8 points, 10.7 assists and a league-leading 2.6 steals. He has just one fewer steal (110) than turnover for the season. David West averages 19.6 points and 9.4 rebounds.

Garnett, LeBron James, Orlando's Dwight Howard, New Jersey's Jason Kidd and Miami's Dwyane Wade were voted by fans to start for the East. The West starters are Denver's Carmelo Anthony and Allen Iverson, the Lakers' Kobe Bryant, San Antonio forward Tim Duncan and Houston center Yao Ming.

Coaches were then required to vote for two guards, two forwards, a center and two players regardless of position. East coaches bypassed a natural center, picking Bosh, a power forward, at that spot.

Allen, averaging 18 points for a Boston team that began the night with an NBA-best 35-8 record, was perhaps the most noticeable omission in the East. Orlando was hoping for a spot for Hedo Turkoglu, averaging a career-best 19.4 points.

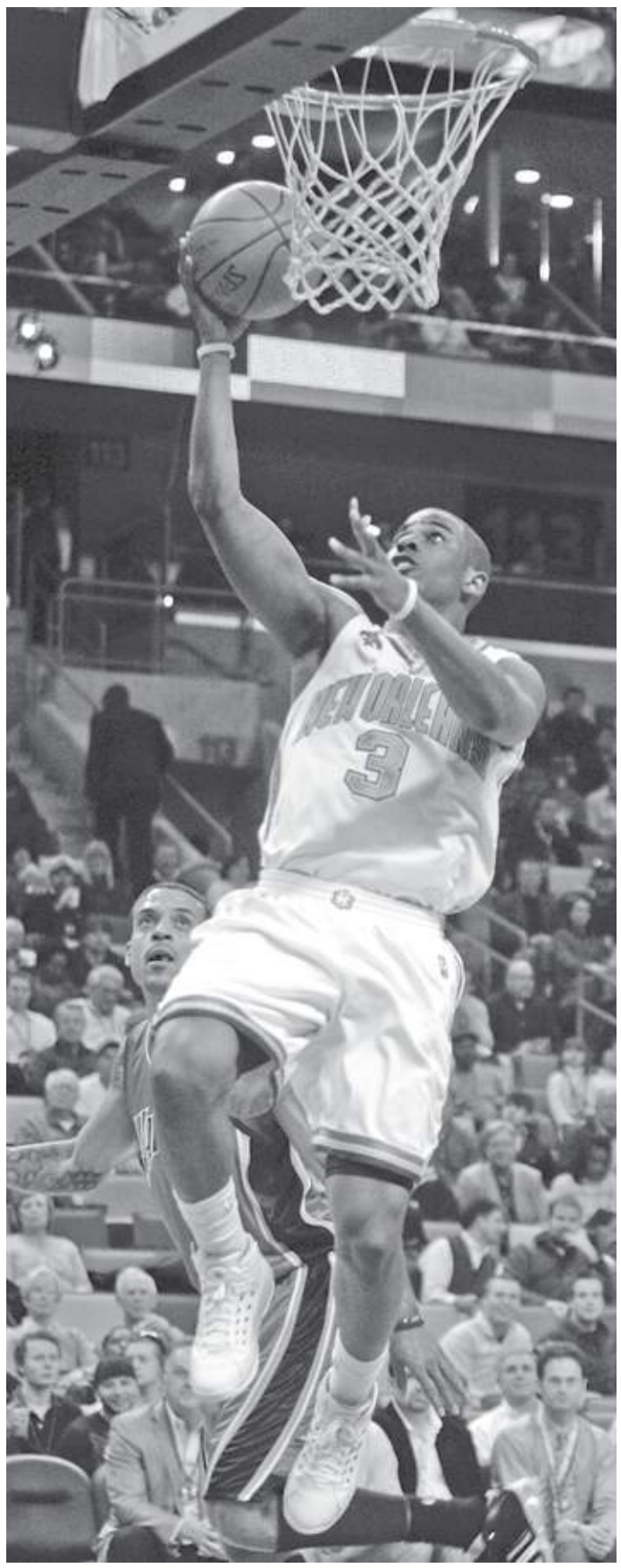
"Obviously, I think Ray should have made it," Rivers said. "The fact that he had to sacrifice the most of the three. It's unfortunate that the other coaches didn't see it that way."

Allen was beat out by Billups and Hamilton, who were selected for the first time together in 2006, when the Pistons were en route to a franchise-best 64 wins.

"I am excited. I'm geeked," Hamilton said. "It just tells you what kind of success we've had as a team. And it's a great opportunity going with Billups again. I feel like we kind of came in together and we've accomplished a lot together."

Besides the tough choices at guards, the West center spot was deep, with Stoudemire beating out Denver's Marcus Camby and the Hornets' Tyson Chandler. Nowitzki was hoping teammate Josh Howard would be selected as a forward.

"It's always a great honor to be chosen, but I'm very disappointed that Josh didn't make it," he said before the Mavericks' played at Boston. "He's having a pretty good year. He deserves to be there as much as I do, so that's pretty disappointing."



AP

New Orleans Hornets guard Chris Paul (3) scores two of his 21-first half points against the Golden State Warriors in the first half of an NBA basketball game in New Orleans, Wednesday, Jan. 30, 2008.

Celtics hang on to beat Mavericks, 96-90

BOSTON (AP)—The NBA-leading Boston Celtics hung on to beat Dallas 96-90 on Thursday, denying the Mavericks bid to go top of the Southwest Division.

Point guard Rajon Rondo had a season-high 12 rebounds, following one of them with a putback layup with 42 seconds left to give the Celtics the lead.

The Celtics, which had lost 5 of 11 to take some sheen off a record-breaking start to the season, remain unbeaten against Western Conference teams.

Spurs 84, Suns 81

In Phoenix, an undermanned San Antonio rallied to beat Phoenix and end a three-game losing streak.

Tim Duncan banked in a shot with 30.9 seconds remaining, and Manu Ginobili and hit four late free throws to secure victory.

Ginobili finished with 19 points, including 12-of-12 from the line, while Duncan had 16 points and 17 rebounds.

Defeat cost the Suns the chance to take the lead in the Western Conference.

Pistons 90, Lakers 89

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Tayshaun Prince's 3-pointer with 4.4 seconds left lifted Detroit over Los Angeles.

Kobe Bryant had 39 points and 10 rebounds for the Lakers, but didn't get a shot on the final possession, which ended with Lamar Odom's airball. Bryant had an unusual triple-double, adding a career-high 11 turnovers to his scoring and rebounding numbers.

The Pistons have won nine straight at home over the Lakers. Prince led the Pistons with 22 points.

SuperSonics 101, Cavaliers 95

In Seattle, the home side held off a late surge to beat Cleveland, which played without LeBron James.

Chris Wilcox scored Seattle's first 10 points and Kevin Durant had 12 of his 24 in the first quarter, to give the Sonics an early advantage.

Two nights after snapping their franchise-record, 14-game losing streak by beating NBA champions San Antonio, the Sonics took out the reigning Eastern Conference champ.

James sat out the game after spraining an ankle Wednesday.

AP

Tiger Woods from the U.S. drops his club after playing his second shot into the water on the 13th hole during the first round of the Dubai Desert Classic, Dubai, United Arab Emirates Thursday, Jan. 31, 2008.

Tiger Wood takes lead in Dubai Classic

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—Tiger Woods picked up right where he left off last week—at the top of the leaderboard.

Woods, who won the Buick Invitational on Sunday by eight strokes, shot a 7-under 65 Thursday to take a two-shot lead after the first round of the Dubai Desert Classic.

"I played well today, just a bunch of good golf shots," Woods said after his bogey-free round at the Emirates Golf Club.

Eleven players, including Miguel Angel Jimenez and Abu Dhabi Golf Championship winner Martin Kaymer, were tied for second at 67. Ernie Els, Sergio Garcia and defending champion Henrik Stenson were tied with 10 others another stroke back.

Woods said he played better in Dubai than he did last week at Torrey Pines.

"I had two good days of practice the last couple days and started to hit the ball a lot better than I did last week," said Woods, who won the Dubai tournament in 2006.

Last year, Woods was plagued by poor putting and finished third here. He missed a few chances Thursday, but wasn't complaining.

"I had a couple of good opportunities to make some putts and just kind of ran them over the edge, but overall today was just—couldn't ask for a better start," the world's No. 1 player said.

Jet lag also didn't appear to bother him.

"The better shape I've gotten, the easier it is. I don't usually have a problem. It usually takes me maybe a day and I'm good to go," said Woods, who arrived in Dubai on Tuesday after flying halfway around the world to the oil-rich United Arab Emirates.

Woods' dominant win at the Buick Invitational was his fourth straight and 62nd career title, tying Arnold Palmer for fourth place on the PGA Tour list. If he triumphs in Dubai, it will be his seventh win in eight starts.

"He's playing at a very good level at the moment," Garcia said. "We know that the only thing we can do is keep trying, keep trying, keep playing our hardest and, you know, try to challenge him as much as possible."

Kaymer had been trailing Woods by one until he bogeyed the final hole.

Jimenez had a hole-in-one on the seventh.

Colin Montgomerie, who played in the same pairing with Woods, banged his driver on the turf after hitting a wayward shot at the ninth hole. Though the Scot made four birdies, he also had two double-bogeys—including at the ninth—to finish at 72.

Upshaw will accede to HGH testing

PHOENIX (AP)—NFL players will consent to a urine test for Human Growth Hormone once such a test is developed.

Scientists, however, appear to be closer to developing a blood test for HGH, which stimulates growth and cell reproduction in humans.

"We all know there is no reliable test for HGH," Gene Upshaw, executive director of the NFL Players Association said Thursday at the union's Super Bowl news conference. "Until a test is developed for HGH, there's really not an awful lot to talk about. And when that test is developed, we really believe it should be a urine test. No one is interested in a blood test. We got a lot of big tough guys, but they don't even like to be pricked on the finger to give blood."

Commissioner Roger Goodell has said repeatedly since taking office just before the 2006 season that the league would implement a test for HGH as soon as one was found.

Upshaw's stance is similar to the one taken by baseball, which has pledged to adopt any validated urine test but does not want to test blood.

Baseball officials have said there is no commercially available validated test for HGH. John Fahey, head of the World Anti-Doping Agency, disputes that, saying two weeks ago that "the storing of blood is practical, in fact has been effectively in practice for some time in World Anti-Doping Code-compliant testing."

Safety Rodney Harrison of the unbeaten New England Patriots, the favorites in Sunday's Super Bowl with the New York Giants, was suspended last Aug. 31 for the first four games of the season after he admitted using "a banned substance" for the purpose of "accelerating the healing process."

Harrison did not acknowledge what the substance was, although he said this week he had made a mistake "and learned from it."

At the time of the suspension, ESPN.com reported that Harrison admitted he obtained HGH.

On the subject of labor, Upshaw said he expects the NFL's owners to opt out of the current agreement later this year. If that happens, the players' union is ready for a strike or the decertification tactics it used to get free agency after the 1987 walkout, although nothing major would happen until 2010, which would be a year without a salary cap.

"If they want to get out of the deal, there's nothing we can do about it," Upshaw said. "But we'll be prepared."

The agreement was reached after tough bargaining in March 2006, and gave both sides the right to opt out in November. That would lead to 2010 being an uncapped year before the contract expires in 2011.

AP

Gene Upshaw, executive director of the National Football League Players Association, is seen during a news conference Thursday, Jan. 31, 2008, in Phoenix.

Several owners, including Denver's Pat Bowlen and New England's Robert Kraft, have suggested that the current agreement is leaving some teams cash-strapped, making it likely some owners will opt out next year.

Upshaw said that he's heard the complaints and is ready for any outcome.

"At our meeting in March, our priorities for discussion are four options: strike, lockout, decertification or extension," he said.

Extension has been the route of choice for the NFL since its agreement in 1993 that added free agency and a salary cap for the first time.

The league had been without a contract since its last strike in 1987. After the players returned to work, the union decertified and filed an antitrust suit, which they eventually won. That led to the current CBA, which ended six years without a contract.

In the last 14 years, the contract has been extended numerous times before expiration.

Upshaw said he has discussed the topic with Goodell and would continue past November, if necessary, to try to reach an agreement.

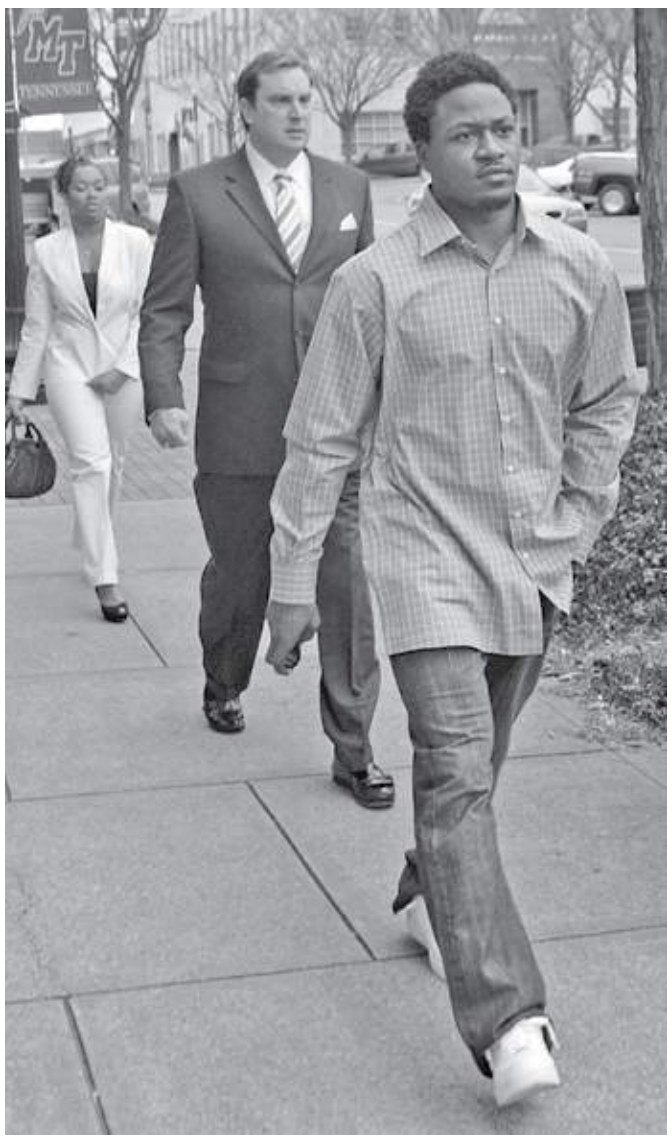
But he warned that the players, who currently get 60 percent of the revenue, will not accept anything lower than that figure. And he said if the two sides get to an uncapped year, there would be no turning back.

"There is not a player in the league who doesn't understand that if we ever get to that point without a cap, we will never have another one again," he said.

Upshaw said the biggest disagreement is among small-market and large-market owners who disagree over non-shared revenue, such as local advertising, concessions and parking. Advertising and local broadcasting rights, in particular, tend to be greater in larger markets or among teams with new stadiums.

In the 2006 agreement, which was the most difficult to reach since the 1993 agreement, the players got an extra $850 million to $900 million in the form of revenue sharing, raising the salary cap for 2007 to $107 million. Upshaw estimated it will be $116 million for 2008.

"Everyone's doing well," he said. "The owners say they're not making money. I think everyone is making money. This isn't hockey, where the players agreed to a 25 percent pay cut. We're not going to do anything like that."



AP

Tennessee Titans cornerback Adam "Pacman" Jones, right, leaves court with his attorney, Worrick Robinson, center, Thursday, Jan. 31, 2008, in Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Legal issues not Pacman's only challenge

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. (AP)—Adam "Pacman" Jones is busy clearing away the legal problems that led to his suspension from the NFL.

His biggest challenge, however, may be proving he can control himself.

Suspended for the 2007 season, the NFL will review Jones' status after the Pro Bowl. Commissioner Roger Goodell has said actions, not words, speak loudest.

A Tennessee judge dismissed two misdemeanor charges Thursday from an incident Aug. 25, 2006, leaving only one criminal charge still pending against Jones in Georgia. But he didn't help himself by being in an Atlanta strip club Jan. 3 while the Titans were prepping for a playoff game.

An attorney who asked that Jones be arrested for allegedly punching her withdrew her request Jan. 16. Atlanta police said Thursday they will not investigate Jones without the victim's help.

Worrick Robinson, one of Jones' attorneys, said the issue of the cornerback being in a club remained and that there's no excuse for that.

"He's a grown man. ... But he's got to take responsibility for his actions. When he's asked, he's going to have to step up and say he was there, that there is no excuse," Robinson said.

Goodell's strict standards are well documented.

Bengals linebacker Odell Thurman is hoping for full reinstatement by April after sitting out the last two seasons.

Originally suspended the first four games of the 2006 season for skipping a drug test, the punishment was extended to a full season after a drunk driving arrest. Two Georgia men accused Thurman of kicking and hitting them at a party last June. No charges were filed, but Goodell turned down Thurman's request to reinstate him for last season.

Given all the problems, there is the possibility the Titans might not want Jones back.

They went from giving up the most yards defensively in the NFL with Jones in 2006 to fifth best and a 10-6 record with a playoff berth without him. A video popped up recently on the Internet showing Jones saying he saw himself in Dallas with a couple Pro Bowls in two or three years.

Jones did not comment Thursday when asked if he had done enough to be reinstated. Robinson said the video was shot last summer when Jones was upset at not being allowed to take part in training camp.

"He still considers himself to be a member of the Titans' team until he's told otherwise. We don't have any reason to think otherwise," Robinson said. "But again, he's got to be reinstated before that hurdle can be crossed."

One step in that direction came with the dismissal of misdemeanor public intoxication and disorderly conduct charges stemming from an incident Aug. 25, 2006, outside a club in this Nashville suburb.

Jones had been upset over his missing wallet and was arrested after cursing at officers before leaving.

With Jones' no contest plea in Las Vegas on Dec. 6, he now has only one pending charge of felony obstruction left in Georgia from a February 2006 encounter with a police officer. A hearing in that case has been postponed until March.

The most authorities here could have punished Jones was a $50 fine for each charge, and district attorney William Whitesell said the Titans cornerback had been punished much more for his behavior through the league's suspension.

He missed out on $1.29 million in base salary.

This case had been settled a year ago. Jones had to pay court costs and go through anger management with the judge telling him to stay out of trouble for six months.

But Las Vegas police named Jones as the person who incited a fight inside a strip club on Feb. 19, 2007, that led to a triple shooting that left one man paralyzed. Whitesell argued last July that Jones being charged in Nevada was enough to show the cornerback did not follow the agreement.

Jones pleaded no contest Dec. 6 in Las Vegas to conspiracy to commit disorderly conduct in a plea deal reducing two felony charges.

Before the misdemeanor charges were dismissed on Thursday, the prosecutor asked Jones to apologize to the officer in writing, which he did.

"Mr. Jones hopefully has learned something and been punished enough," Whitesell said.

The judge asked Jones to speak to the court, and the cornerback said he has learned a lot about dealing with others and how to conduct himself.

"It won't happen again," he said.

Vic victorious anew at Top Pool Bar

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Vic "Hawk" S. Hocog made it back-to-back wins in the Top Pool Bar Professional 9-Ball Billiards Tournament when he won the competition last Saturday, Jan. 26, at the Garapan sports bar and watering hole.

Hocog, who last week beat perennial winner and establishment owner Zheng Jian Qing in the finals, this time overpowered R.J. "Bullet" Mascarinas, 4-0, in the championship round.

The menacing-looking but affable local cue artist started off the way he ended last week, beating Zheng, 4-2, in the opening round.

The other first round match saw Mascarinas making mincemeat of Robert Sanciangco, 4-1. Rico Montano, meanwhile, got a bye.

In the second round, Mascarinas joined Hocog in the finals after beating Montano, 4-1. Hocog was given safe passage into the championship round, where he proceeded to skunk Mascarinas. He earned $50 for his win.

This week's 9-ball champion said his back-to-back wins are just a start and dared other topnotch pool players to challenge him at Top Pool Bar every week.

"This is the year where I promise to see a progress in my game after running into a slump in 2007. With dedication to the game by practicing almost every night, I am slowly seeing the rewards of my practice by topping off the elite players in the island twice. I'm inviting everyone to come and join the tournaments at Top Pool Bar if you want to step your game to a higher level," he said.

Top Pool Bar Professional 9-Ball Billiards Tournament is held every Saturday and entry fee is $10. The format is race-to-four games. The venue's 8-ball tournament, meanwhile, has been moved to Thursday with also a $10 entry fee. The 8-ball competition uses a double-elimination format. Both tournaments follow Billiards Congress of America rules.

The sports bar is also reminded interested 8- and 9-ball players that early birds get a chance to practice for free on any of Top Pool Bar's full-size billiard tables an hour before the competition.

Top Pool Bar, located along Hotel Street Garapan a stone's throw away from the Paseo de Marianas, is as spacious as it is modern and boasts of two 9-1/2-by-5-foot tables usually found in professional tournaments abroad.

For more information on the ongoing 9-ball weekly competition, call Zheng at 287-7676 or check out the competition's website at www.saipanero.com/bars/toppoolbar.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Vic "Hawk" S. Hocog won his second straight Top Pool Bar Professional 9-Ball Billiards Tournament last Saturday, Jan. 26, at the Garapan sports bar and watering hole.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	36	8	.818	_
Toronto	25	20	.556	11 1/2
New Jersey	19	26	.422	17 1/2
Philadelphia	18	28	.391	19
New York	14	31	.311	22 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	29	18	.617	_
Washington	24	20	.545	3 1/2
Atlanta	18	24	.429	8 1/2
Charlotte	18	28	.391	10 1/2
Miami	9	35	.205	18 1/2

Central Division

Detroit	33	13	.717	_
Cleveland	25	20	.556	7 1/2
Indiana	19	27	.413	14
Chicago	18	27	.400	14 1/2
Milwaukee	18	29	.383	15 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

New Orleans	32	13	.711	_
Dallas	31	14	.689	1
San Antonio	29	16	.644	3
Houston	25	20	.556	7
Memphis	13	33	.283	19 1/2

Northwest Division

Utah	28	18	.609	_
Denver	27	18	.600	1/2
Portland	26	19	.578	1 1/2
Seattle	11	35	.239	17
Minnesota	9	36	.200	18 1/2

Pacific Division

Phoenix	33	14	.702	_
L.A. Lakers	28	16	.636	3 1/2
Golden State	28	19	.596	5
Sacramento	20	24	.455	11 1/2
L.A. Clippers	14	28	.333	16 1/2

Yesterday's Games
Detroit 90, L.A. Lakers 89
Boston 96, Dallas 90
Seattle 101, Cleveland 95
San Antonio 84, Phoenix 81

DUBAI DESERT CLASSIC SCORES

FIRST ROUND

Tiger Woods, United States	31-34	65
Jeev Milkha Singh, India	34-33	67
Pelle Edberg, Sweden	34-33	67
Miguel Angel Jimenez, Spain	31-36	67
Jyoti Randhawa, India	31-36	67
Martin Kaymer, Germany	32-35	67
Thomas Levet, France	32-35	67
Graeme McDowell, N. Ireland	33-34	67
Scott Hend, Australia	33-34	67
Simon Dyson, England	34-33	67
Gary Murphy, Ireland	31-36	67
Andrew McLardy, South Africa	34-33	67
Henrik Stenson, Sweden	31-37	68
Ernie Els, South Africa	35-33	68
Soren Hansen, Denmark	34-34	68
Shiv Kapur, India	33-35	68
Sergio Garcia, Spain	35-33	68
Benn Barham, England	33-35	68
Ariel Canete, Argentina	36-32	68
Robert-Jan Derksen, Holland	34-34	68
Daniel Vancsik, Argentina	34-34	68
James Kingston, South Africa	35-33	68
David Howell, England	34-34	68
Garry Houston, Wales	33-35	68
Peter O'Malley, Australia	33-35	68
Damien McGrane, Ireland	34-34	68

By The Associated Press

TORGESON

From Page 28

Day and the ocean swims by Saipan Swim Club coach Mike Stewart, but his hospital duties prevented him from doing so.

"[I] did not finish a surgery until the [Tapochao] race had started [and] I have been on call at the hospital all three of [the ocean swim] weekends," said Torgeson, who stopped training to spend some time with his family during the holidays.

Almost a week after their return, Torgeson started 2008 by joining the Half Marathon event of the Weekend Festival of Runs where he won the men's division crown and was the overall top finisher.

Though he failed to break the 2003 course record of one hour, 17 minutes, and 46 seconds set by Tuyoshi Kaburaki, his 1:21.00 time was still the best among the 38 male runners that completed the 13.1-mile course.

Torgeson said his flexibility in training kept him in top form but he aims to raise his level. "Working at the hospital and living on this island in general rewards those people who are flexible. I am flexible in my training, doing what I can when I can. Maybe the next level of competition requires a strict workout plan but I am not there yet. And my style seems more fun."

Aside from winning the Half Marathon, Torgeson also placed second to Fujio Miyachi of Japan in the Inaugural 12-kilometer Marianas Coffee Trail Run last Saturday.

Torgeson and Miyachi were separated only by more than two minutes. He clocked in at 1:25.45 against the 1:23.31 of the Japanese champion.

Other races that Torgeson joined in 2007 were the Saipan International School 5K Fun Run, 2nd Annual Banzai Memorial Half Marathon, Inaugural Hell of the Marianas Full Island Cycling race, and the 4th Annual Jingle Bell 5K Fun Run.

WOMEN'S

From Page 28

Becca Newman, 7-aside league co-chair, said the captains of each team are coming up with team names, which will be available together with the complete rosters next week.

The WFL held its final day of practice last Jan. 26, from 9am to 11am, at the Garapan field where more than 60 female players, composed mostly of rookies and veterans, joined the three-Saturday clinics.

Newman, who is co-organizing the 7-on-7 league with Pritchard, said they held the final day of the women's boot camp last Jan. 19 where rookies honed their newfound skills while veterans polished their craft.

Patty Coleman, Lindsay Davis, Meaghan Hassel Shearer, Zoe Jewell, Emily Gries, Amanda Allen, and Dean and Alleny Tenorio alternated in conducting the drills.

Coleman and Davis conducted the drills on shooting and aiming at the goals, while Shearer and Jewell shared tips on the finer points of defense. Gries and Allen discussed the proper shielding of the ball, while the Tenorios taught all participants about fair play.

Another scrimmage, where the new players were mixed up with the veterans, took place after the drills to give the rookies the chance to practice what they have just learned for the day.

The boot camp started last Jan. 12 at the American Memorial Park field where participants had a great time learning the "beautiful game."

For more information about the 7-on-7 league, email Newman at rnewman112@hotmail.com or Vanessa Pritchard at holly_jollyvkp@hotmail.com.

IFC HOLDS

From Page 28

Fina Sisu, Koblerville, Dan Dan, Naftan, Obyan, Oleai, San Antonio, San Jose, and Susupe.

Next year, residency restrictions will disappear when the local football association allows players to join clubs of their choice. When that happens, players from all across Saipan will be able to register with one of the more storied clubs in the Marianas.

The IFC was originally started when a multinational group of friends came together to join the men's soccer league in 2006. While there wasn't any individual star who stood out above the crowd, the evenly talented squad found success in its ability to shoot, move, and communicate as a team.

That spirit continues today as the IFC teaches children of all ages the fundamentals of soccer as well as the benefits of teamwork and civic pride. To help pass the message along, the IFC offers a number of quality coaches, many of whom are the committed players of the CNMI National Team, to guide the players every step of the way.

With hundreds of millions of players worldwide, soccer is undeniably the most popular sport around the world. After years without a viable program in the CNMI, soccer's popularity caught fire locally to make it the fastest growing sport in the Marianas.

Thanks to the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association, more than 800 registered players of all ages suit up regularly to take the fields of Saipan with little more than passion and a soccer ball.

The IFC's enthusiastic volunteers have already spent countless hours organizing the logistics for the upcoming season, and is still the business community to support enable the next generation of players to take part in the world's game.

The new season is just around the corner and more information about the IFC is available via email at independentfootballclub@yahoo.com or by stopping by today's practice at Koblerville Elementary School. ***(IFC)***

LEARNING

From Page 28

ception, make that a mandatory exception. And I had any number of people, some friends and some professional associates and many who are both, drive that point home, that I needed to smarten up and look at life differently from here on out.

It was unimaginable to me that beyond my family members and dearest friends, so many people—many of great public stature—took the time to call or send flowers. One of the first calls was from Darrell Green, who should be elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame by Saturday evening. Warren Sapp said if I didn't change my life he'd come looking for me. I heard from my basketball buddies, Grant Hill, Charles Barkley, Reggie Miller, Mike Fratello and Rick Carlisle. Two commissioners—David Stern and Roger Goodell—called. I've heard multiple times from football buddies/Arizona neighbors Nick Lowery and Bertrand Berry. Byron Leftwich, whom I've known since he was 14, left a long heartfelt voicemail. Howie Long sent a touching text message. Roy Green, who had a heart attack at about the same age, made himself available to talk about what comes next for me. I was startled to open the door and get a big basket of fruit from Abe and Irene Pollin and flowers from Phil Jackson and Jeannie Buss. I'm grateful for, and humbled by, each and every expression.

But two things left me speechless and of a mind to reevaluate a lot of stuff. The phone rang while I was in my hospital bed Monday night and the voice on the other end said, "This is Jeff George. I was calling to tell you I'm thinking of you and praying for you." Yep, Jeff George. No. 3 in your program. For years and years, especially during his brief time in D.C., I was pointedly critical of George. I'm sure some of it was over the top and unnecessary. Yet he was big enough to put that aside and call with get-well wishes. He told me about his father having a heart attack when he was about my age, 49, about lifestyle changes and how families respond with support.

George sounded like an expert on the topic and on recovery. He talked and I listened.

I've also, in this space and on TV, been pointedly critical of Kobe Bryant. Yet, I answered the doorbell Wednesday and there were flowers and balloons from Kobe wishing me a quick return to my duties. I hope I have the grace to extend myself to someone who might offer a public rebuke of my work.

The lesson learned is probably that a bad pass on third and 12, a missed jump shot at the buzzer or even a prolonged disagreement with a teammate doesn't make that the dominant theme of a man's life. It's not like I won't make a critical observation about Kobe in the playoffs, if necessary, just that such comments ought to be expressed in context and not cavalierly used to form larger judgments about a person's life. At the very least there ought to be an acknowledgment of a sense of compassion and humanity that aren't to be taken for granted.

There's also an obligation on my part to take all this support and advice and make the necessary changes that will enable me to get out of bed and be a producer again, a more responsible one who can go to work with the consistency of Cal Ripken and also understand the need for better health and a more balanced life. As Jeff George said in our conversation the other night, "This is definitely manageable. And you'll do it. But it doesn't mean you're in total control. This whole thing should help you learn the difference."

Vic victorious anew at Top Pool Bar

Vic "Hawk" S. Hocog made it back-to-back wins in the Top Pool Bar Professional 9-Ball Billiards Tournament when he won the competition last Saturday, Jan. 26, at the Garapan sports bar and watering hole. 27

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Paul, West give Hornets 2 All-Stars

Chris Paul and David West were picked for their first All-Star game Thursday night, giving the hometown New Orleans Hornets a pair of players for the event. 25

Torgeson to try PIC Double

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Eli Torgeson's next mission is to join this year's Pacific Islands Club Double—7th XTERRA Saipan Championship and 19th Tagaman Triathlon.

Torgeson said he has to train harder in swimming since that is one sport that he is not really good at. Still, he is determined to finish both the XTERRA and Tagaman triathlons, which is held a week apart this coming March.

"My weak sport is swimming so that will be my concentration. I will be competing in XTERRA as well as Tagaman this year," said Torgeson.

He said he is also interested in coaching his five-year-old son Carsten's Under-6 football team. "I also hope to play some [football] and enjoy the social aspect of a team sport."

Torgeson is an anesthesiologist at the Commonwealth Health Center. "I am the guy in charge of having you go to sleep for your surgery and waking up feeling good."

Torgeson and his wife Alyson finished their undergraduate studies at Williams College in Massachusetts and they both finished medical school at University of New Mexico.

Torgeson and Alyson also have a two-year-old daughter named Pia.

Torgeson trains four to five times a week depending on the availability of his work schedule at CHC. He was planning to join the Mt. Tapochao Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving

See TORGESON on Page 27

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Eli Torgeson raises his arms in victory after topping the Half Marathon event in the 2008 Winter Festival of Runs last Jan. 19 at Micro Beach at the American Memorial Park.

IFC holds practice today

The newest addition to the Northern Marianas Islands football family is ready for business as the Independents Football Club kicks off its practice schedule this afternoon at Koblerville Elementary School.

The newly established club is calling on all its players to turn out for this afternoon's practice at 4pm, when organizers continue to lay the foundation for the future of football in the Marianas.

This year, the club format is currently set up for regional alignment, with the IFC welcoming players from the airport area, As Lito, As Perdido, Chalan Kanoa, Chalan Piao, Coral Ocean Point,

See IFC HOLDS on Page 27

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Patty Coleman, left, demonstrates the proper way to kick the ball in the Women's Football League boot camp on Jan. 19 at the American Memorial Park Field.

Women's 7-on-7 league opens today

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The Women's Football League will open its 7-on-7 league at 8am today at the Garapan Elementary School Field.

Five teams will be competing for the league crown with the Vanessa Pritchard-Toi Smith captained squad taking on the Laura Williams- and Dora Camacho-led team in the opener.

The team of co-captains Divya Sharma and Katie Busenkell will face the squad of Alleny Tenorio and Lovelle D'Lonsol in the second match. Maria Ornes and Nicollette Seckeler's team will have a bye.

The opening will also be the last day for registration in the 7-aside league where the cost of registration is $10. After registration, the late registrants will be assigned to a team.

See WOMEN'S on Page 27

By MICHAEL WILBON
The Washington Post

Learning to live a balanced life

The site of Super Bowl XLII, the gigantic steel-faced stadium that looks like a spaceship plopped down in the desert, is only a 35-minute drive west around the beltway known as the 101. The center of Super Bowl activity is a 25-minute drive south to downtown Phoenix, a quick trip past a residential oasis called Paradise Valley, past Camelback Mountain.

It's just outside my door really, but I can't get there. Couldn't get to Super Bowl media day on Tuesday. Couldn't get to the Patriots' and Giants' interview sessions Wednesday or Thursday. Couldn't mingle with former coaches and former players in the lobbies of the downtown hotels to find out what they think about the Patriots being undefeated. Can't do any of it because I had a heart attack in the wee hours of Monday morning.

Since then it's been no reporting, no writing, no TV, no fighting with Kornheiser, nothing to do with football or the Super Bowl. What would have been my 21st consecutive Super Bowl assignment for *The Washington Post* has instead included my first ambulance ride, a trip to the emergency room, angioplasty, and a dramatic lifestyle change that now calls for heart medicine, insulin injections and daily blood-pressure checks ... or else die early.

I landed in Phoenix late Sunday night, drove to my home-away-from-D.C.-home in Scottsdale, looked at some e-mail, and went to bed at 1:30. At 3:15 a heavy pain in my left arm and on the left side of my chest woke me. I thought it was indigestion, and started drinking water, but the pain persisted. Took some Advil. ... The pain got worse. Tried to go back to bed, but it became unbearable. They were classic heart attack symptoms, the pain up and down the left arm and in the upper-left chest, stuff you see on TV dramas and sit-coms. It was after 15 minutes of denial that I woke my wife and told her, "I know this sounds insane, but we've got to drive to the emergency room; I'm having a heart attack."

Within six hours, after nitroglycerin pills, morphine drips and an ambulance transfer to an intensive care unit, a cardiologist to whom I will forever be indebted conducted an angioplasty, using a balloon to open a blocked artery. For the first time in my life, I was admitted to a hospital and stayed there for two more days—and found out that not only wasn't I indestructible but that I now would be a full-fledged, insulin-dependent diabetic.

Until very recently, I'd never missed a big assignment of any kind because of illness. My father grew up plowing fields and picking cotton and bailing hay in the Deep South during the depression and his sense of work was you don't miss—ever. If you do, it's a sign of weakness or frailty, and he didn't tolerate it from his two boys. And though that has overwhelmingly served us well and I believe in that work ethic wholly, the fact was this was a permissible ex-

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